

the KUROSAKI corpse delivery service

黒鷲死体宅配便

eiji otsuka 大塚英志 housui yamazaki 山崎峰水

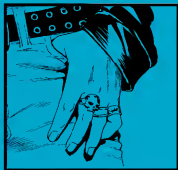
STAFF A



Psychic

[イタコ]: 死体との対話

STAFF B



Dowsing

[ダウジング]: 死体の搜索

STAFF C



Hacking

[ハッキング]: 情報の収集

YOUR BODY IS THEIR BUSINESS!



黒鷲死体宅配便

the KUROSAKI corpse delivery service



story
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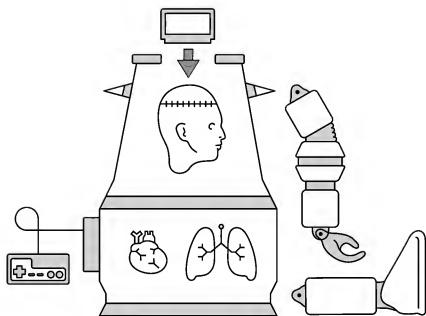
editor and english adaptation
CARL GUSTAV HORN

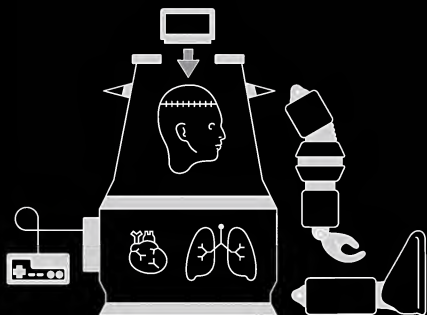
lettering and touch-up
IHL



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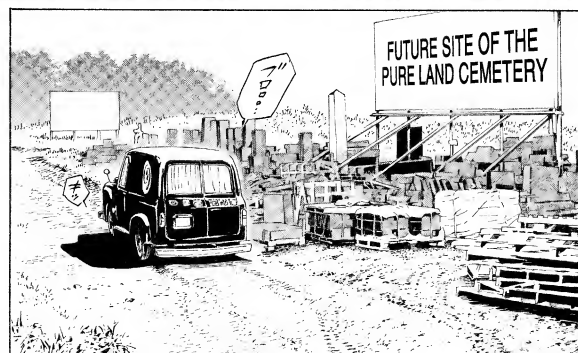
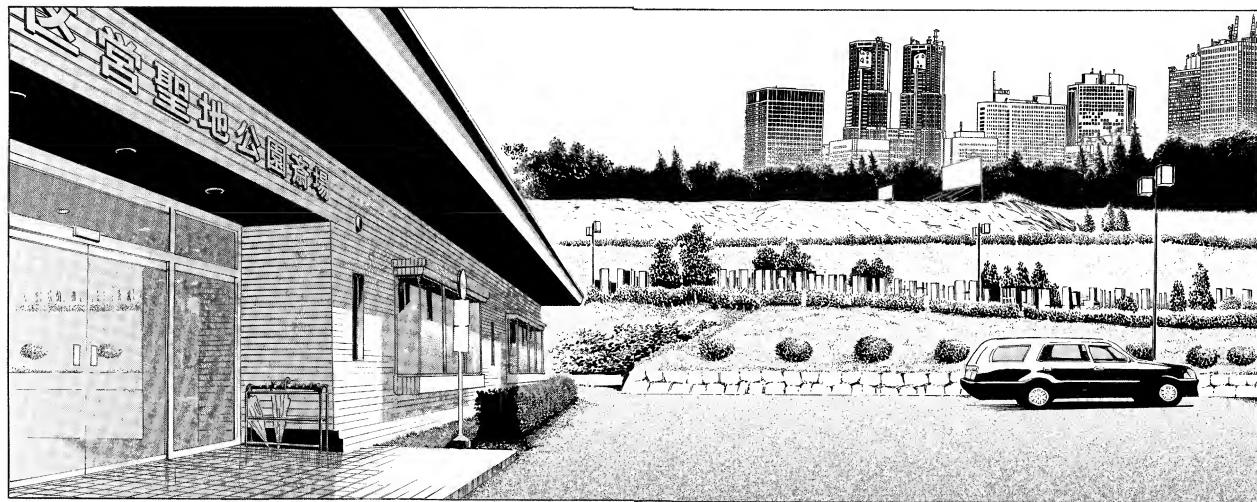


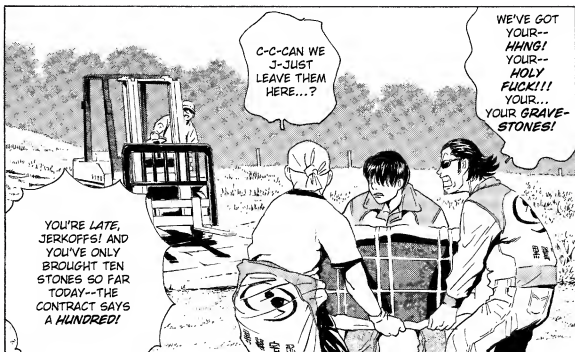




1st delivery
ハートで勝負

fight with my heart





YOU'RE LATE,
JERKOFFS! AND
YOU'VE ONLY
BROUGHT TEN
STONES SO FAR
TODAY--THE
CONTRACT SAYS
A HUNDRED!

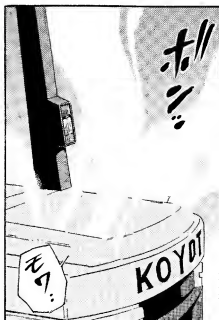
C-C-CAN WE
J-JUST
LEAVE THEM
HERE...?

WE'VE GOT
YOUR--
HNG!
YOUR--
HOLY
FUCK!!!
YOUR...
YOUR GRAVE-
STONES!



MAN! DELIVERING
GRAVESTONES
TO A NEW
CEMETERY! WE'VE
SUNK ALMOST AS
LOW AS THEIR
RECIPIENTS!

Y-YES,
SIR...WE'LL
GET THEM
H-HERE AS
FAST AS
WE CAN...

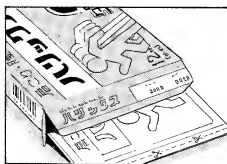
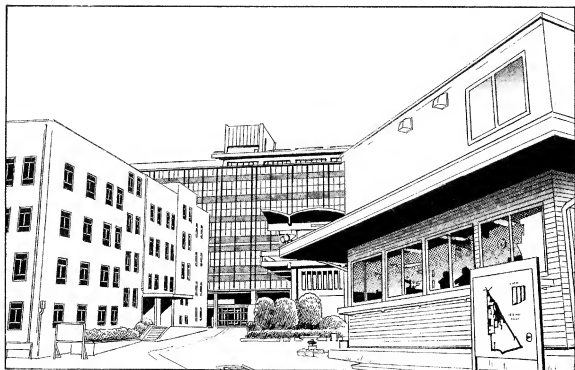


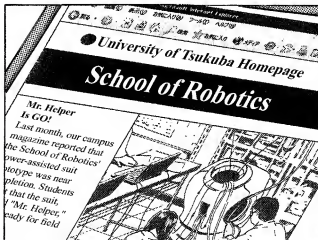
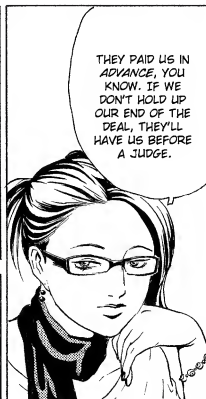
I'LL BET IN
AMERICA THEY
JUST TIE 'EM TO A
GHOUL'S BACK OR
SOMETHING. SEE, IT
GETS LURED TO
THE GRAVE BY THE
SMELL, AND THEN
ALL YOU GOTTA DO
IS BRAIN IT WITH
A SHOVEL.

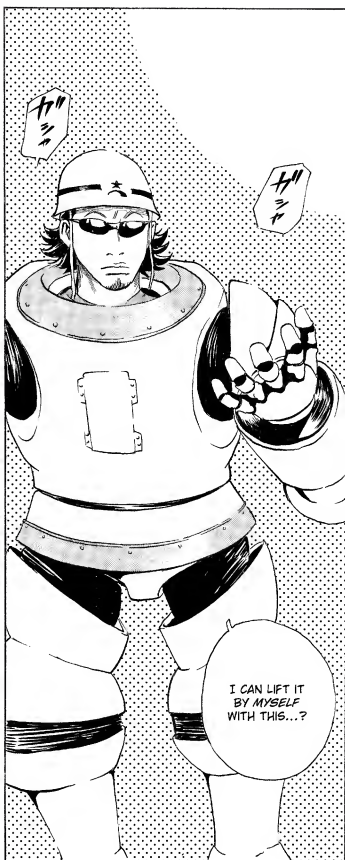
I NEVER
THOUGHT
ABOUT IT
BEFORE, BUT
I GUESS
SOMEBODY
HAS TO
DELIVER
THEM.

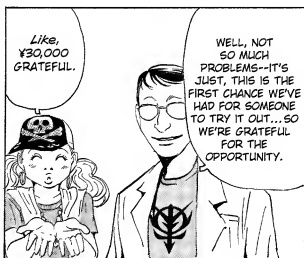
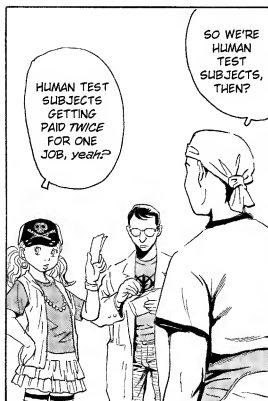
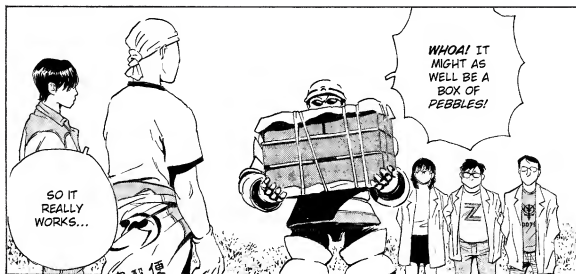


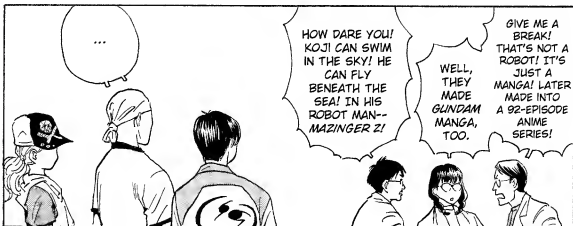
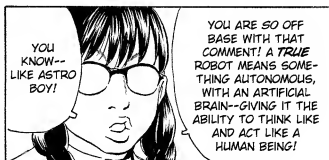
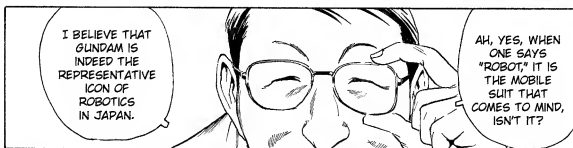
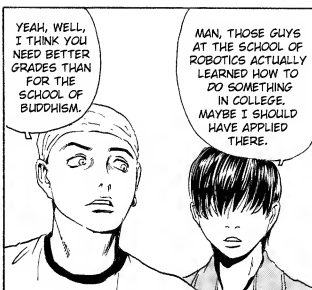
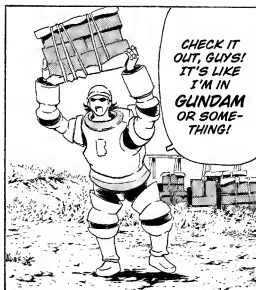


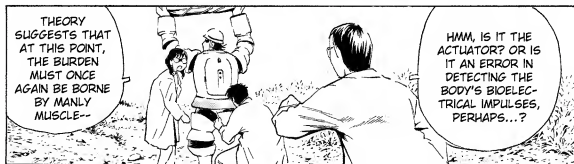
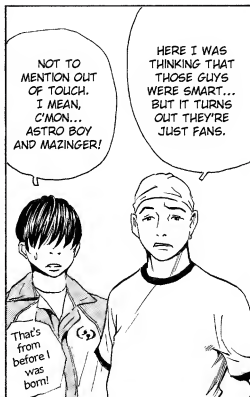




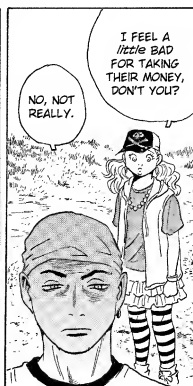
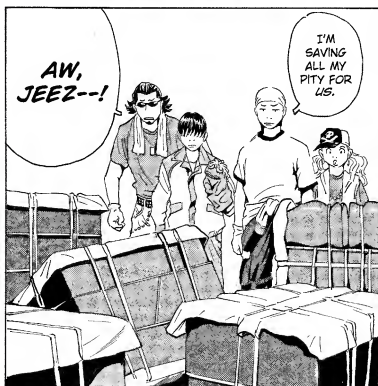
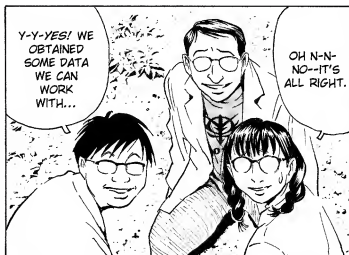


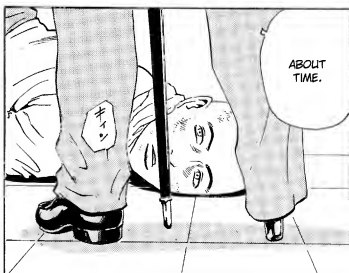
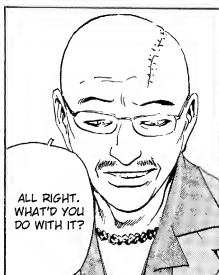
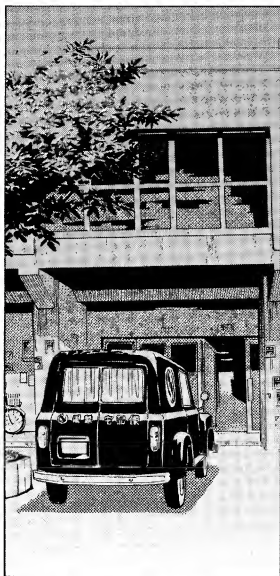


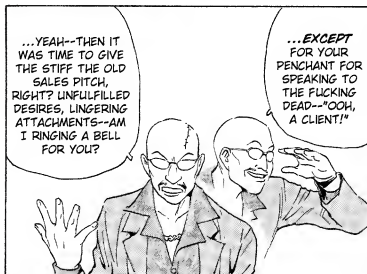
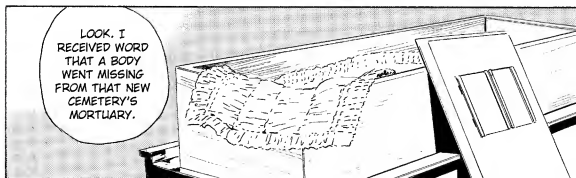


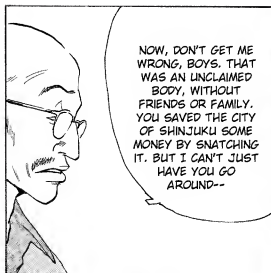












NOW, DON'T GET ME
WRONG, BOYS. THAT
WAS AN UNCLAIMED
BODY, WITHOUT
FRIENDS OR FAMILY.
YOU SAVED THE CITY
OF SHINJUKU SOME
MONEY BY SNATCHING
IT. BUT I CAN'T JUST
HAVE YOU GO
AROUND--



UHHH...?
COULDN'T HAVE
BEEN US...WE
WERE TOO
BUSY HAULING
THOSE GRAVE-
STONES,
RIGHT...?

YEAH...



IF NO ONE'S
GOING TO MISS
IT, THEN
WHAT'S THE
WORRY?

THAT WAS MY
GOOD COP!
YOU WANNA
SEE MY **BAD**
COP? HUH?
HUH?!

HEY,
TIGHTWAD,
I SAID
WE DIDN'T
DO IT!



HELPING
OUT PEOPLE
WHOSE CAR
JACKS DON'T
WORK?
WHAT?

OH, GREAT.
WHAT IS IT?
ROLLING
BOULDERS
UPHILL?



DON'T BE SUCH
WHINERS, IT'S
NOTHING LIKE
THAT. ALL YOU
HAVE TO DO IS
MOVE A MANGA
ARTIST'S
STUFF--NO
PROBLEM.

IT'S ALL
HERE.



ANYWAY, I
WANTED TO TELL
YOU I'VE GOT
ANOTHER JOB
LINED UP--AND
I'VE ALREADY
ACCEPTED THE
DEPOSIT.



...200 BOXES
OF MANGA...



MANGA
ARTIST, HUH?
WELL, INK,
PEN, PAPER...



THEY'RE
TYRANNICAL
MUTANTS
WHO
CONTROL
US!

THEY ARE
THE
BRAINS--
WE ARE
THE
BODIES!

WHEN
WILL WE
REBEL
AGAINST OUR
SUPER-
EVOLVED
MASTERS?!



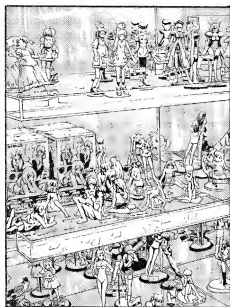
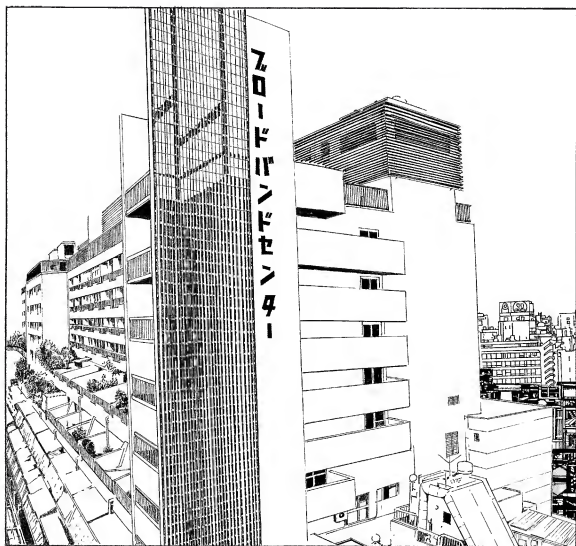
YOU
THINK
SO TOO,
HUH?

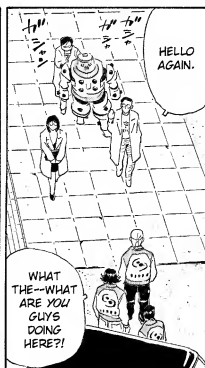
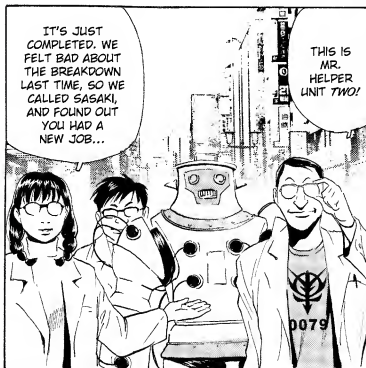
IS IT MY
IMAGINATION,
OR ARE YOU
GUYS BEING
EXPLOITED BY
SASAKI AND
MAKINO?

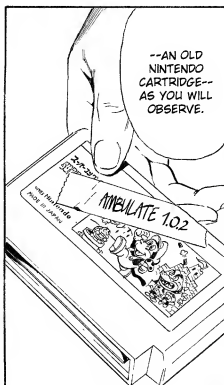
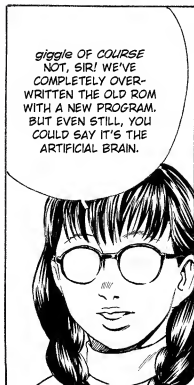
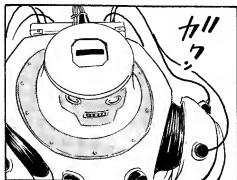
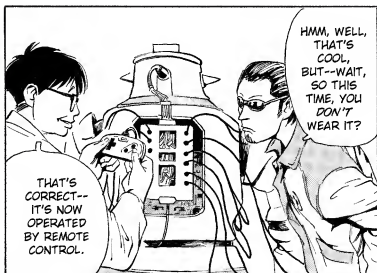
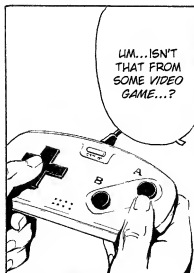


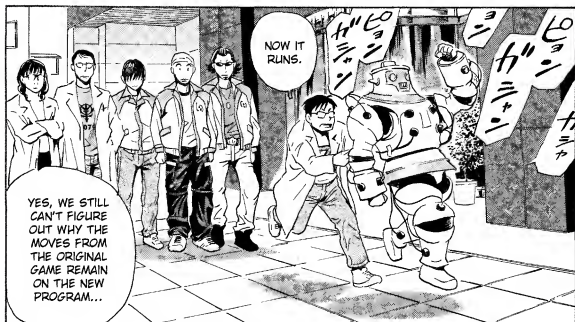
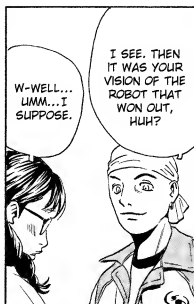
YEAH,
WE'RE
LIKE,
PSYCHIC
THAT
WAY.

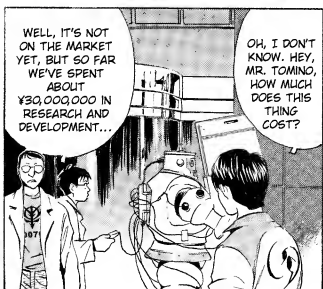
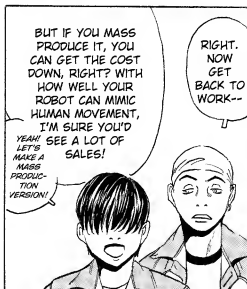
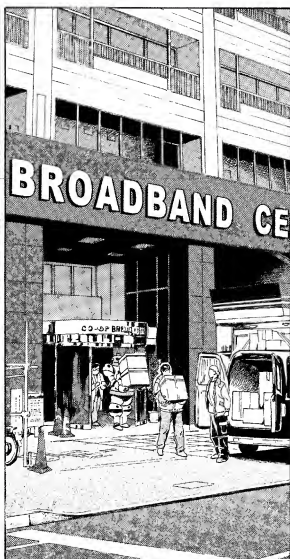
OH, WE WORK
HARD AS WELL.
WE JUST
HAPPEN TO DO
THE HEAVY
LIFTING WITH
OUR MINDS.

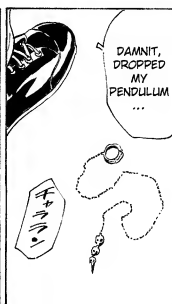
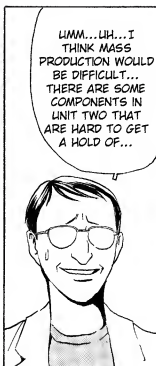


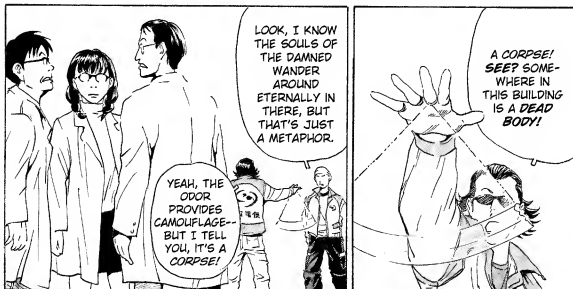
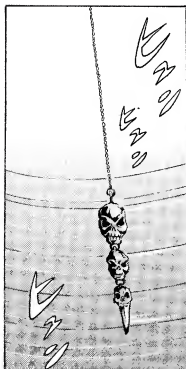




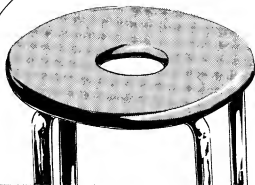








IT WAS
RIGHT
THERE A
MINUTE
AGO...



UM...
WHERE IS
MR. HELPER
UNIT
TWO...?



HUH?

NONSENSE!
WHY, THAT'S
SCIENTIFI-
CALLY IMPOSSI-
BLE!

ARE YOU
SAYING IT
CAME BACK
TO LIFE...?!



NUMATA,
YOU TRY
AND FIND
THAT
CORPSE.

OH HHHH KAY
...WE'LL
SPLIT UP
AND LOOK
FOR IT.

YOU
GOT
IT!

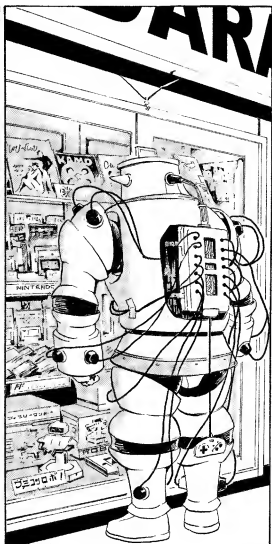
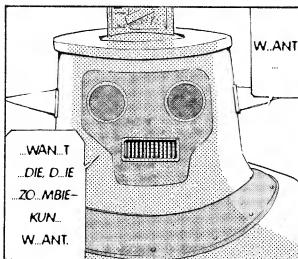
"...THE
ROBOT
STARTED
TO MOVE
ON ITS
OWN?!"



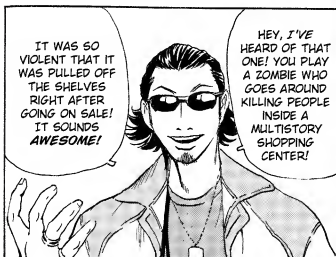
HEY,
SOMETHING
WRONG?

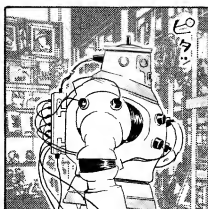
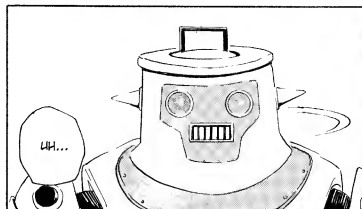
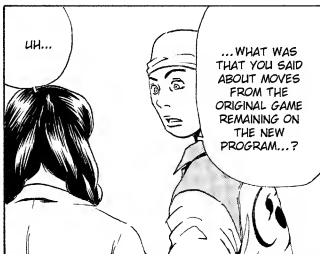
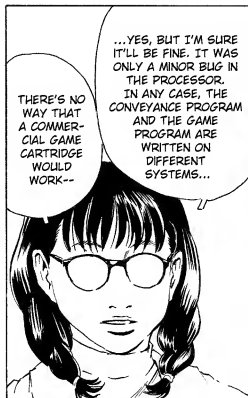


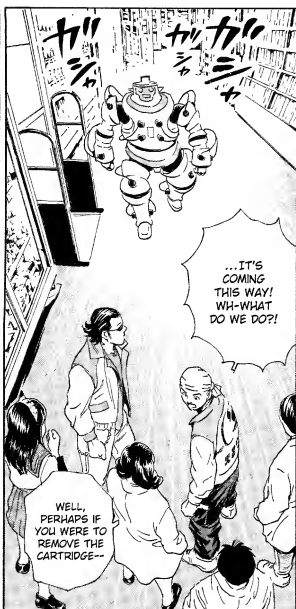
WELL...
ER...

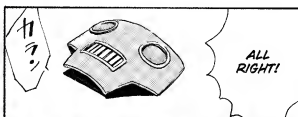
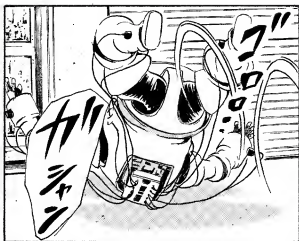


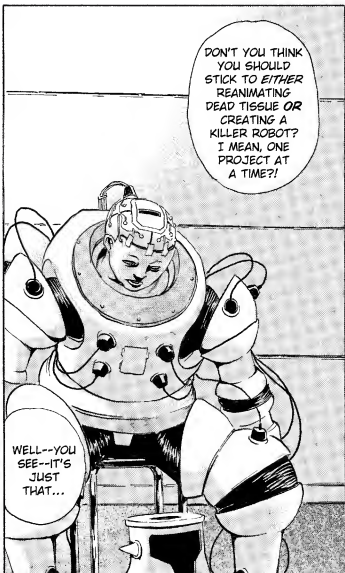
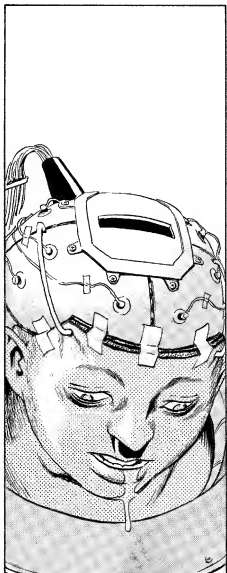












DON'T YOU THINK
YOU SHOULD
STICK TO EITHER
REANIMATING
DEAD TISSUE OR
CREATING A
KILLER ROBOT?
I MEAN, ONE
PROJECT AT
A TIME?!

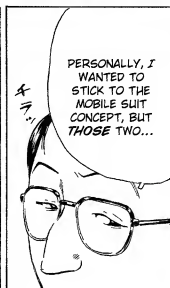
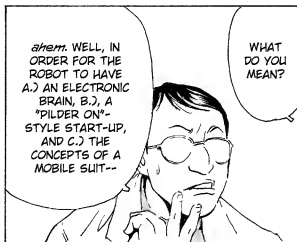
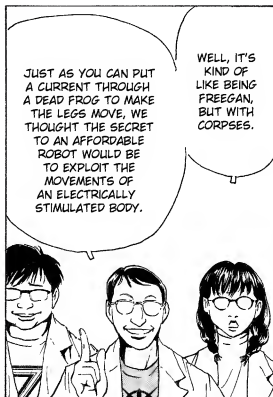
WELL--YOU
SEE--IT'S
JUST
THAT...

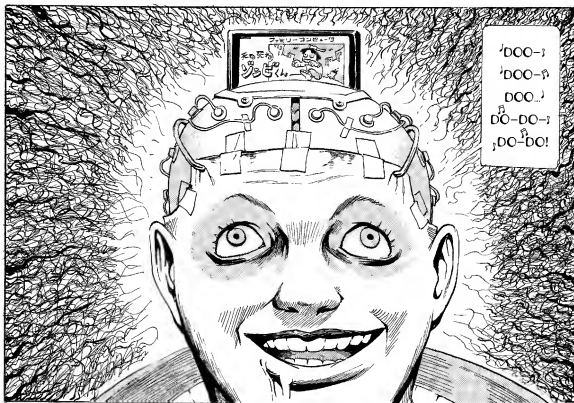


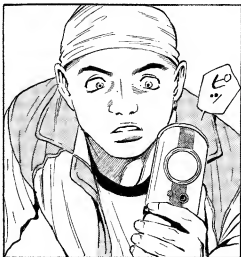
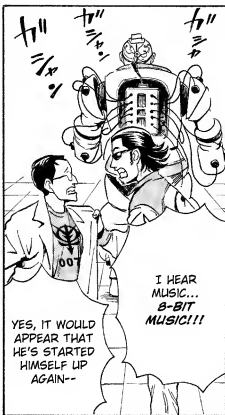
...IT'S JUST
THAT THIS WAS
THE ONLY WAY
TO TAKE INTO
CONSIDERATION
ALL OF OUR
IDEALS...

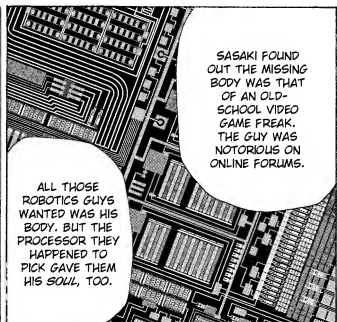
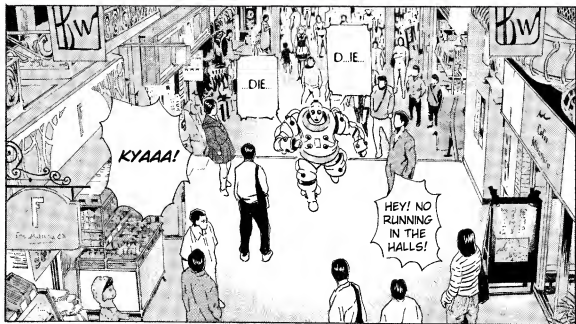
WE'RE SO
SORRY!

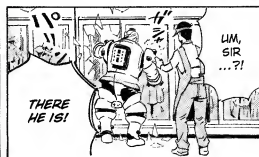
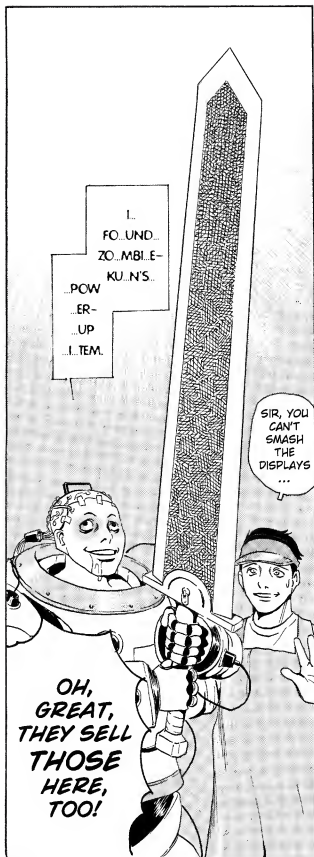
HEY! WAIT
A MINUTE!
ADMITTEDLY IT
TOOK ME A WHILE
THERE, BUT
YOU'RE THE
ONES THAT
STOLE THE BODY
FROM THE
MORTUARY!

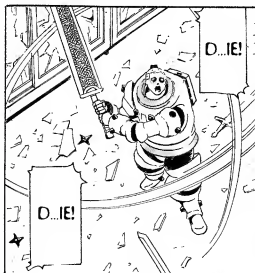


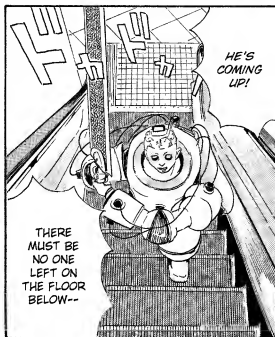
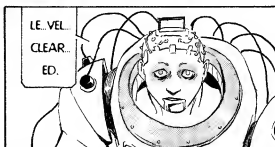




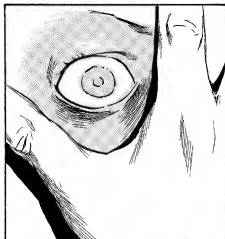


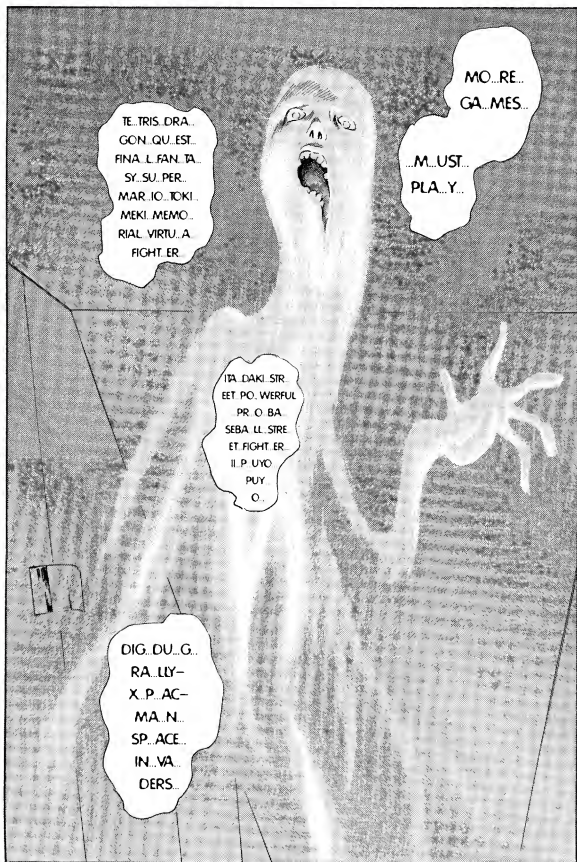












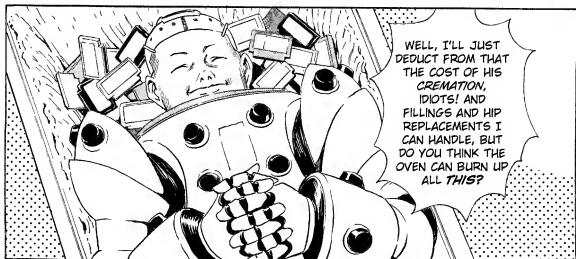
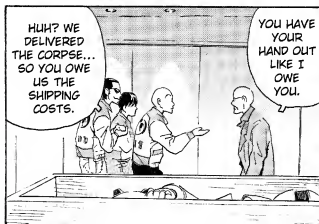
TE..TRIS..DRA..
GON..QU..EST..
FINA..L..FAN..TA..
SY..SU..PER..
MAR..IO..TOKI..
MEKI..MEMO..
RIAL..VIRTU..A..
FIGHT..ER..

MO..RE..
GA..MES..

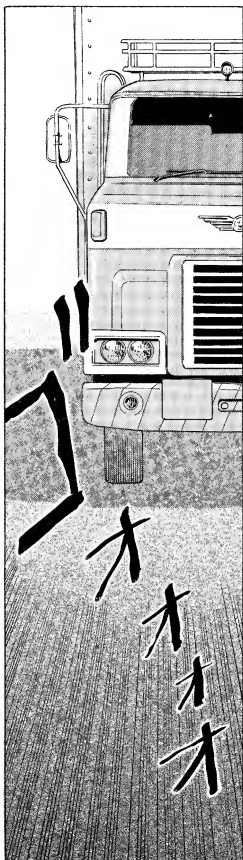
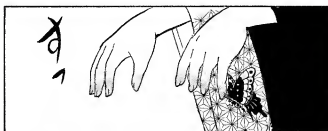
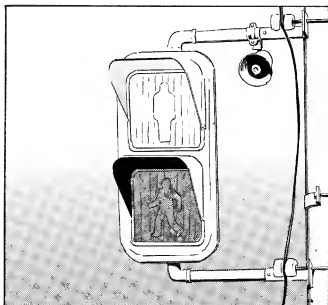
..M..UST..
PLA..Y..

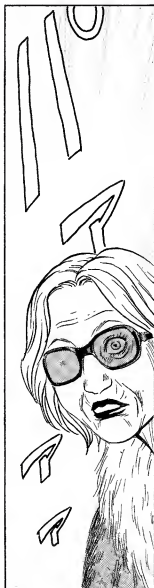
ITA..DAKI..STR..
EET..PO..WERFUL..
PR..O..BA..
SEBA..LL..STRE..
ET..FIGHT..ER..
II..P..UYO..
PUY..
O..

DIG..DU..G..
RA..LLY-..
X..P..AC-..
MA..N..
SP..ACE..
IN..VA..
DERS..



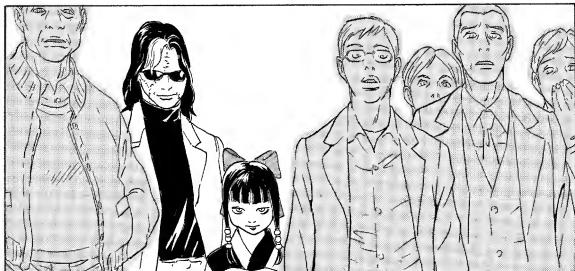


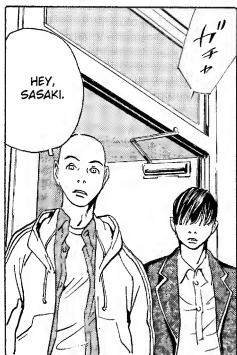


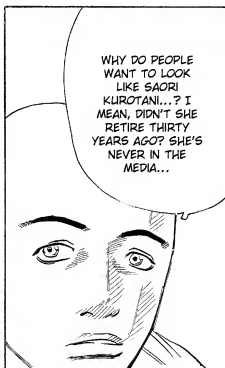
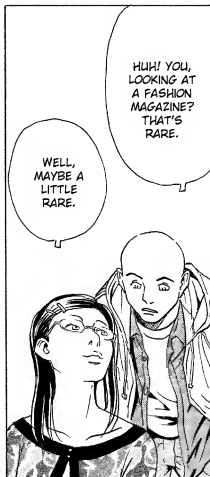
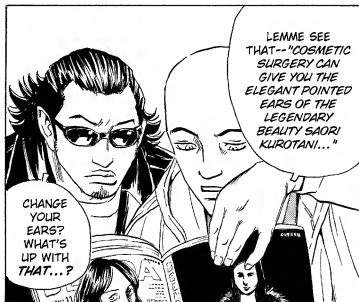






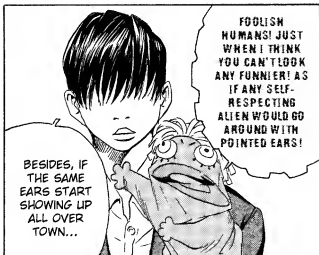








IT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CLOTHES. EVERYONE WEARS THE SAME BRAND NAMES, YOU KNOW.



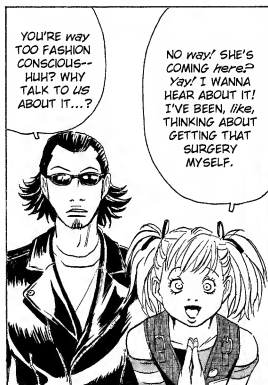
FOOLISH HUMANS! JUST WHEN I THINK YOU CAN'T LOOK ANY FUNNIER! AS IF ANY SELF-RESPECTING ALIEN WOULD GO AROUND WITH POINTED EARS!

BESIDES, IF THE SAME EARS START SHOWING UP ALL OVER TOWN...



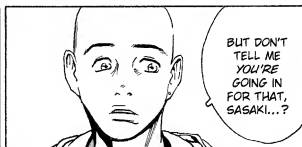
THAT'S THE JAPANESE FOR YOU...

SOME PEOPLE FEEL UNEASY IF THEY DON'T LOOK THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE.



YOU'RE WAY TOO FASHION CONSCIOUS-- HUH? WHY TALK TO US ABOUT IT...?

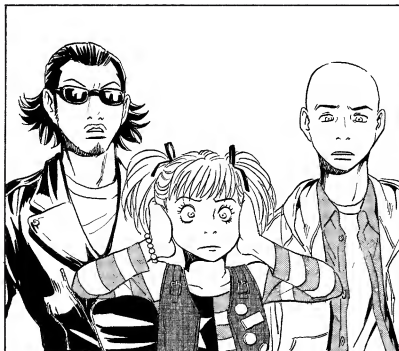
NO way! SHE'S COMING here? Yay! I WANNA HEAR ABOUT IT! I'VE BEEN, like, THINKING ABOUT GETTING THAT SURGERY MYSELF.



BUT DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING IN FOR THAT, SASAKI...?



ONE OF MY GRAD SCHOOL CLASSMATES HAD THIS SURGERY. SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO TALK ABOUT IT WITH US.



SHE SAYS
SHE KEEPS
HEARING THE
PHRASE "GIVE
ME BACK MY
EARS..."



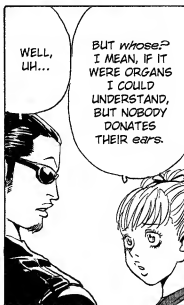
...YOU THINK THIS
ISN'T PLASTIC
SURGERY...? THAT
THE CLINIC'S JUST
TRANSPLANTING
SOMEONE ELSE'S
EARS ONTO THE
PATIENTS...?



...I'VE BEEN
WONDERING
THAT MYSELF.

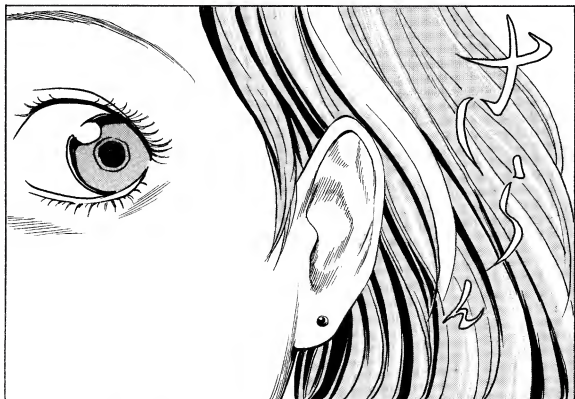


FROM A
CORPSE...?

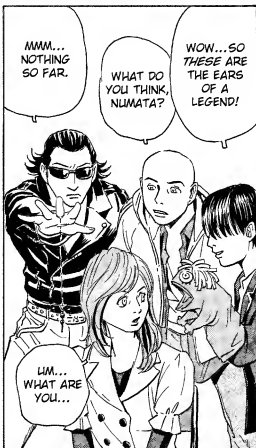


WELL,
UH...

BUT WHOSE?
I MEAN, IF IT
WERE ORGANS
I COULD
UNDERSTAND,
BUT NOBODY
DONATES
THEIR EARS.



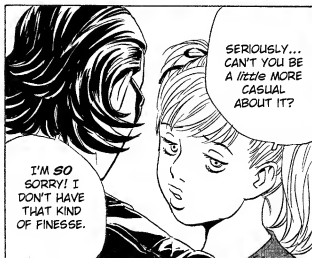
AH! DON'T MIND *them!* THOSE GUYS ARE SUCH WEIRDOS...



MMM... NOTHING SO FAR.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, NUMATA?

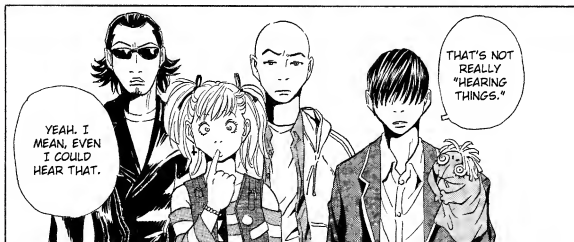
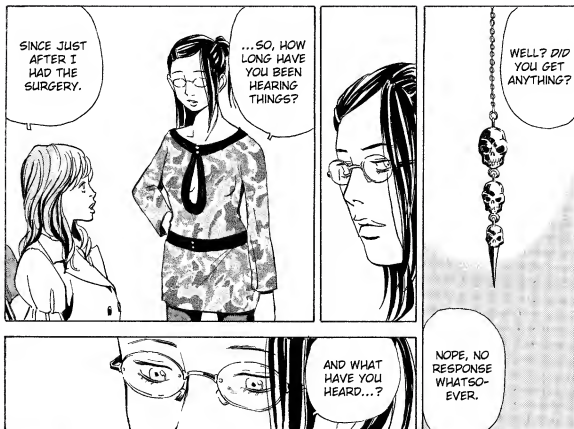
WOW...SO THESE ARE THE EARS OF A LEGEND!

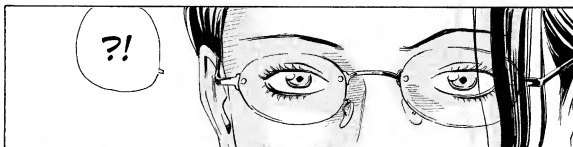


I'M SO SORRY! I DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF FINESSE.

SERIOUSLY... CAN'T YOU BE A *little* MORE CASUAL ABOUT IT?

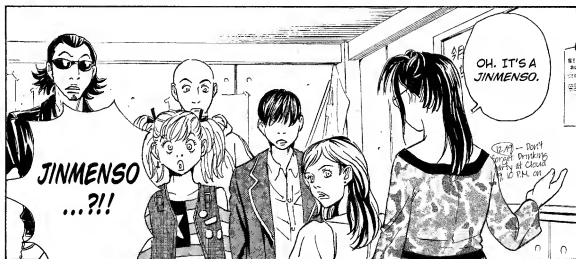
UM... WHAT ARE YOU...







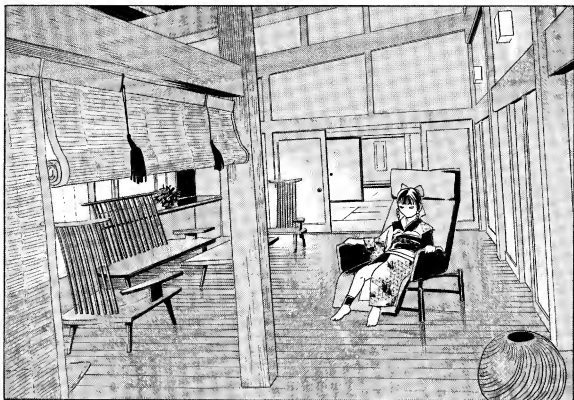
WHA...T...
ARE...YOU...
LOOK...ING...
AT?!

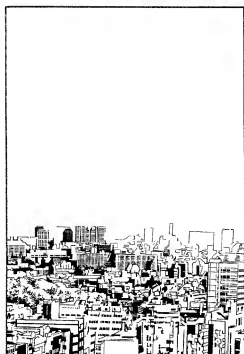
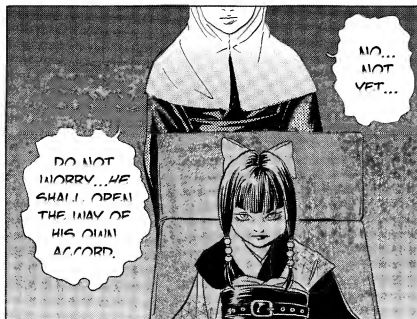


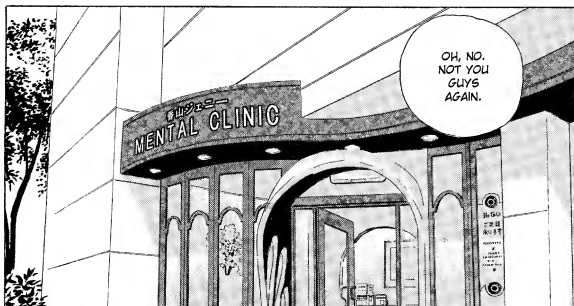
OH. IT'S A
JINMENSO.

JINMENSO
...?!!

J.A. - Don't
forget to check
out the book
at 10 P.M. on
10/10/01







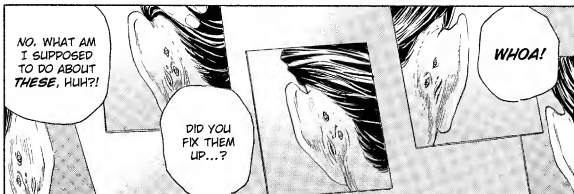


IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, I'VE HAD SIX OTHER GIRLS COME IN FOR COUNSELING... EACH ALSO COMPLAINING OF "HEARING THINGS."



...IN FOLKLORE, A JINMENSO IS A TYPE OF HAUNTING. IN A COMMON FORM OF THE LEGEND, THE FACE OF A MURDER VICTIM APPEARS...

...ON THE FACE OF THEIR KILLER.



NO. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT THESE, HUH?!

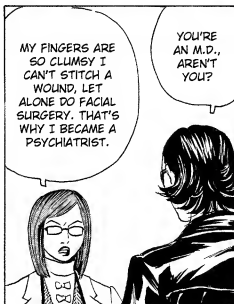
DID YOU FIX THEM UP...?

WHOA!



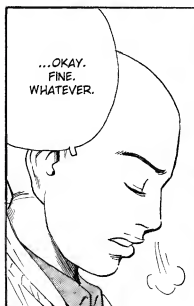
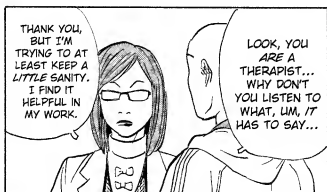
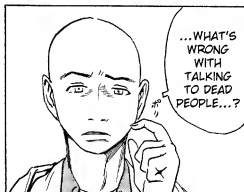
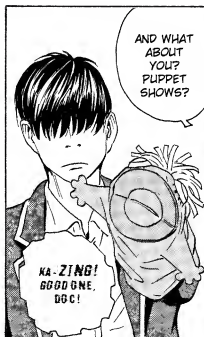
WHY DON'T YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT? YOU'RE SOME KIND OF...SPOOK SPOKESMAN, OR SOMETHING.

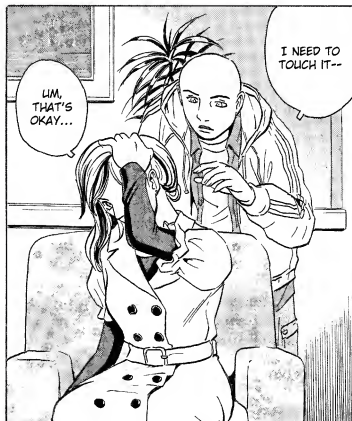
EVERYBODY WANTS ME TO BE AN EXORCIST THESE DAYS...

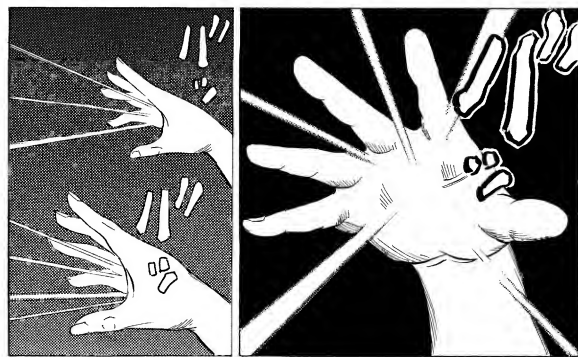
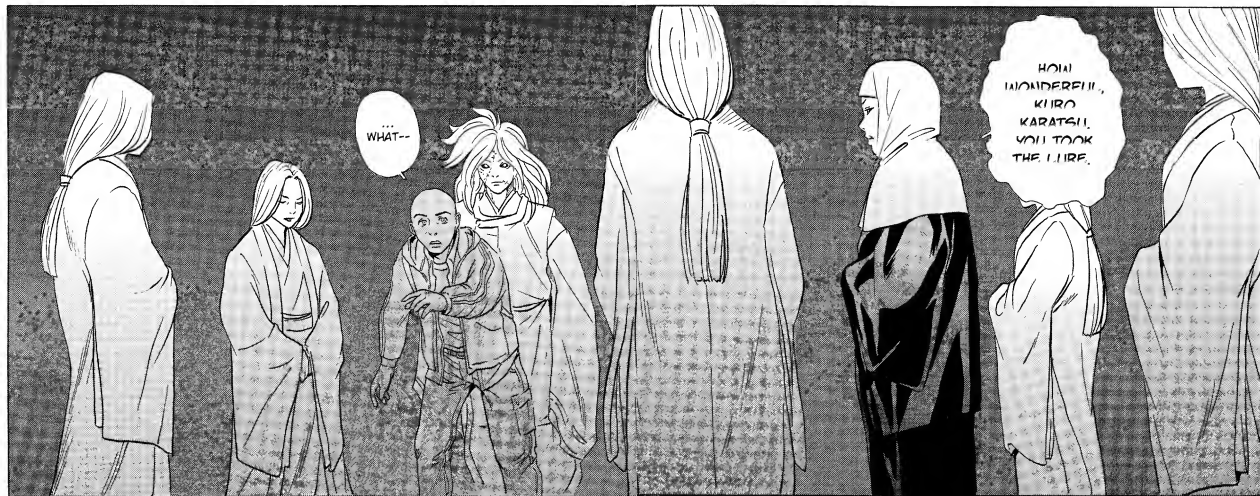


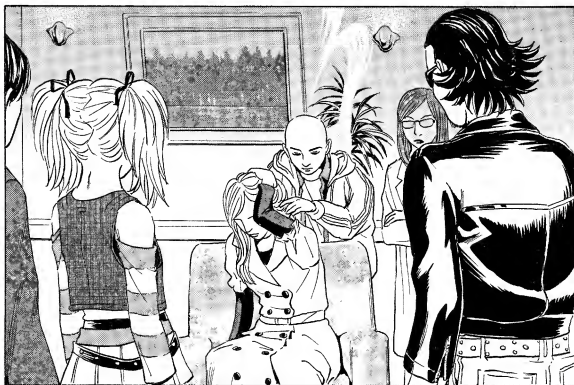
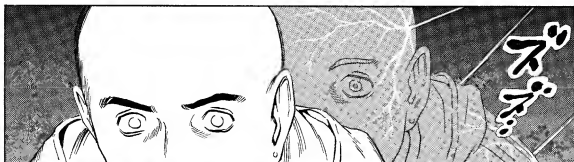
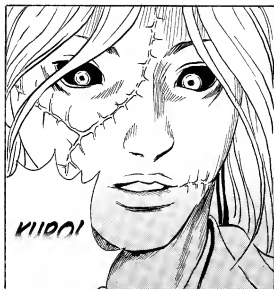
MY FINGERS ARE SO CLUMSY I CAN'T STITCH A WOUND, LET ALONE DO FACIAL SURGERY. THAT'S WHY I BECAME A PSYCHIATRIST.

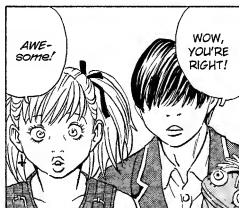
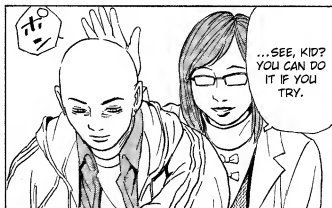
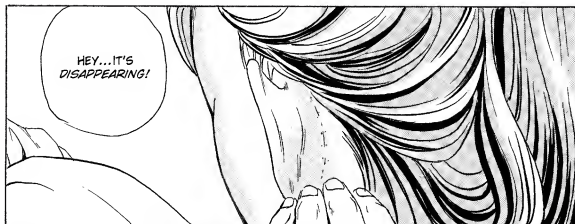
YOU'RE AN M.D., AREN'T YOU?

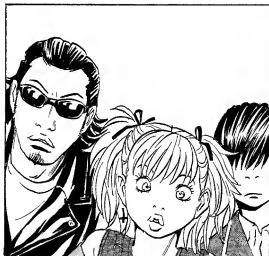


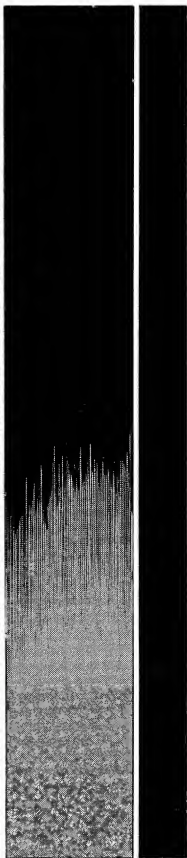
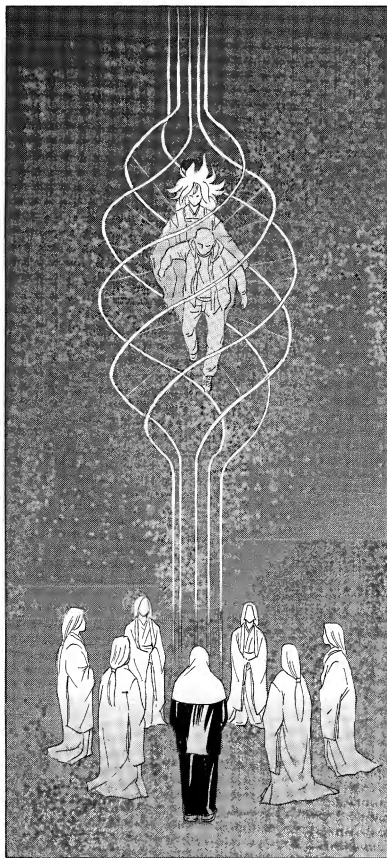


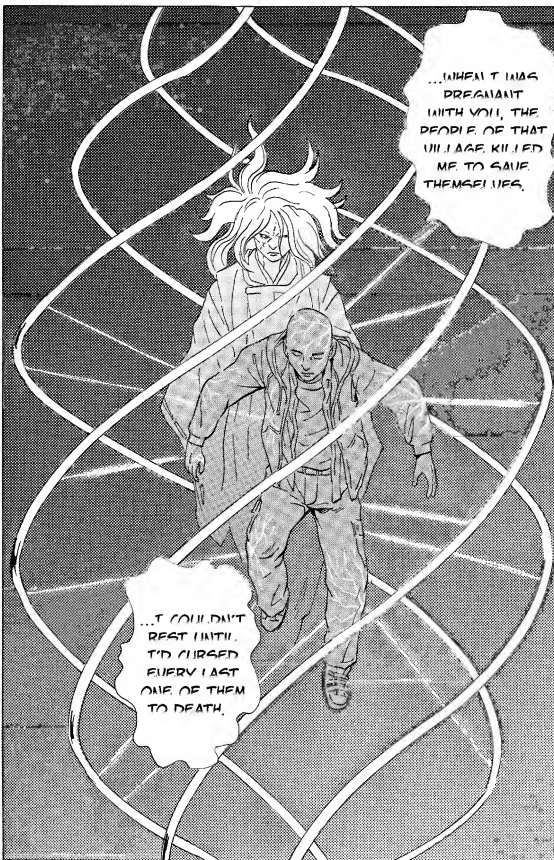










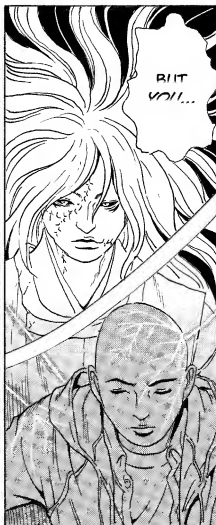


...WHEN I WAS
PREGNANT
WITH YOU, THE
PEOPLE OF THAT
VILLAGE KILLED
ME TO SAVE
THEMSELVES.

...I COULDN'T
REST UNTIL
I'D CURSED
EVERY LAST
ONE OF THEM
TO DEATH.



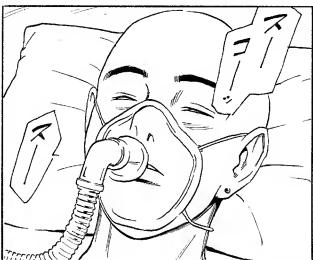
YOU CAN
JUST ROT
AWAY IN
THAT
CELL...
VAISHI.

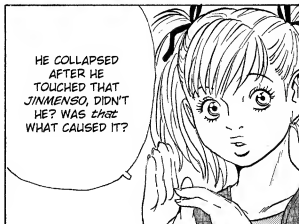
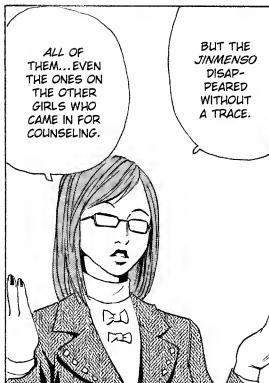
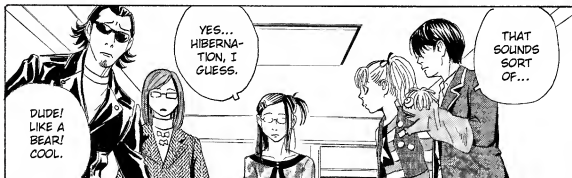
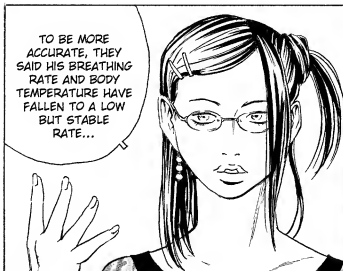


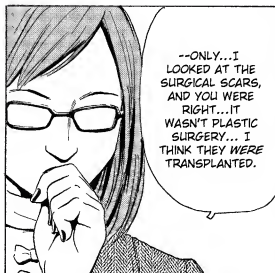
BIT
YOU...

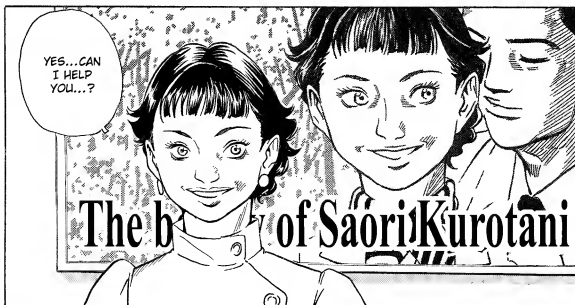


...YOU
RETRAVED
ME--
DELATED
YOURSELF
TO
SOMEONE
LIKE
THAT...











BUT WE
COULD GIVE A
SIXTY-YEAR-
OLD WOMAN
THIS FACE
THROUGH OUR
PROCEDURES...

...ALTHOUGH
I AM A BIT
YOUNGER
THAN THAT.



giggle!
THANK
YOU--BUT
NO.

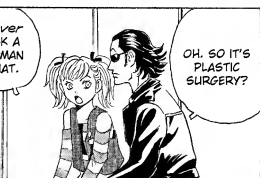
AS IF? SAORI
KUROTANI
MUST BE
OVER SIXTY.

AREN'T YOU,
LIKE, THAT
FAMOUS
ACTRESS?
WHAT'S HER
NAME...

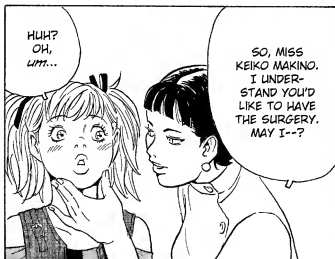


tee-hee! IT'S
FINE... WE HAVE
AN EXCLUSIVE
CONTRACT WITH
MISS KUROTANI,
AND I'M A WALKING
ADVERTISEMENT
FOR IT...

Never
ASK A
WOMAN
THAT.

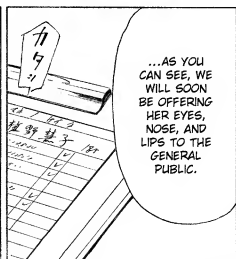


OH. SO IT'S
PLASTIC
SURGERY?

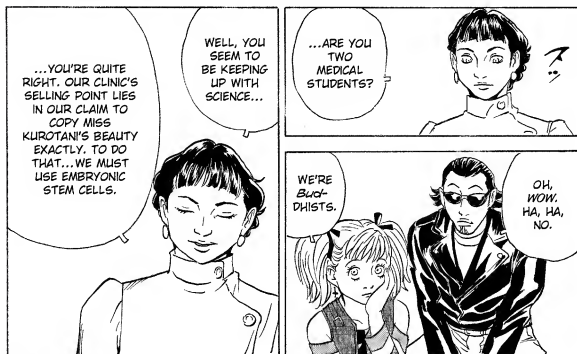
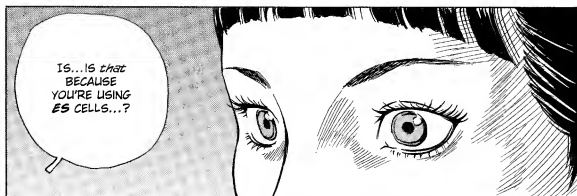
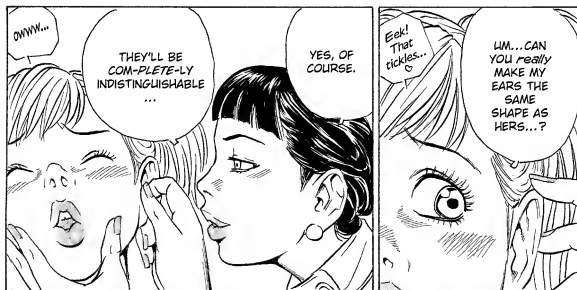


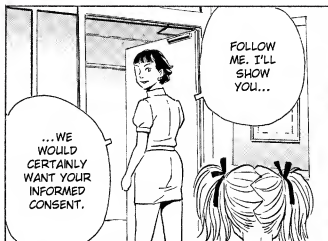
HUH?
OH,
um...

SO, MISS
KEIKO MAKINO.
I UNDER-
STAND YOU'D
LIKE TO HAVE
THE SURGERY.
MAY I--?



...AS YOU
CAN SEE, WE
WILL SOON
BE OFFERING
HER EYES,
NOSE, AND
LIPS TO THE
GENERAL
PUBLIC.



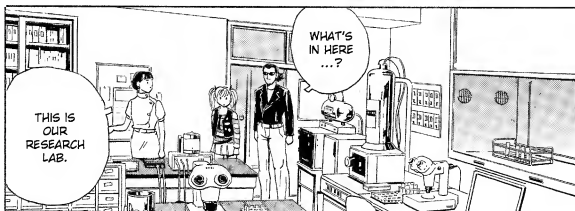


...WE
WOULD
CERTAINLY
WANT YOUR
INFORMED
CONSENT.

FOLLOW
ME. I'LL
SHOW
YOU...



IN
cosmetic
surgery...?



THIS IS
OUR
RESEARCH
LAB.

WHAT'S
IN HERE
...?



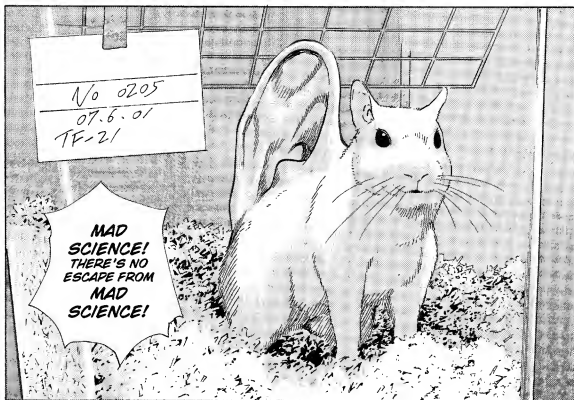
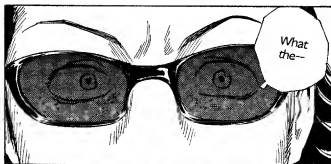
JUST...
HER
EARS?

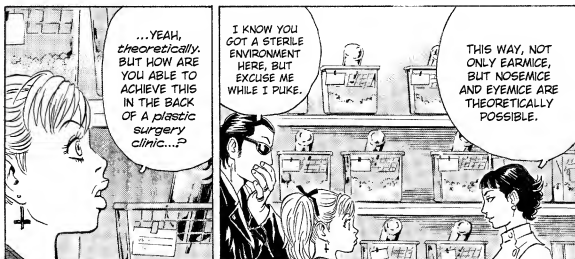
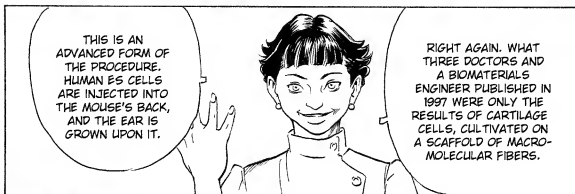
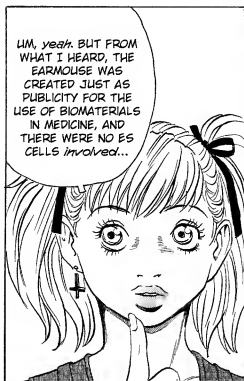
EXACTLY.
THIS WAY,
PLEASE.

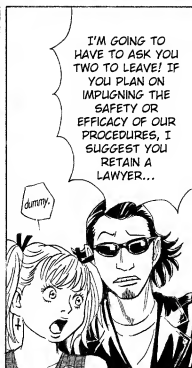
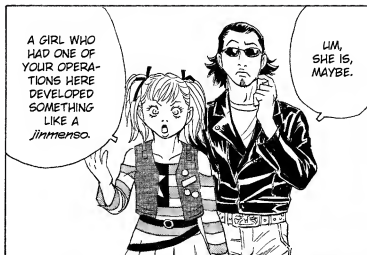


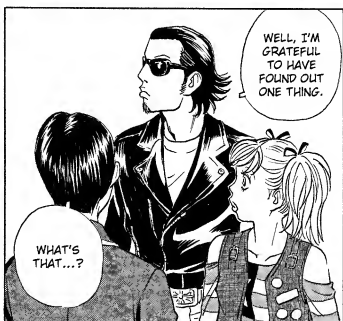
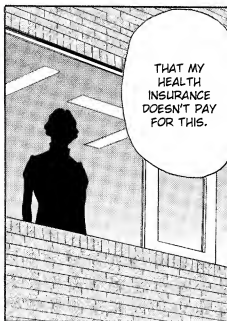
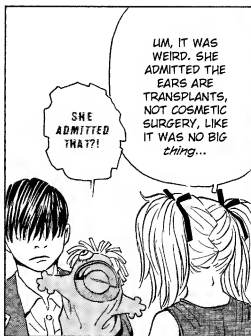
HUMAN EMBRYONIC
STEM CELLS,
COMMONLY KNOWN
AS **ES** CELLS, HOLD
THE POTENTIAL TO
DIFFERENTIATE INTO
ANY KIND OF
TISSUE, AND
PROPAGATE
INDEFINITELY.

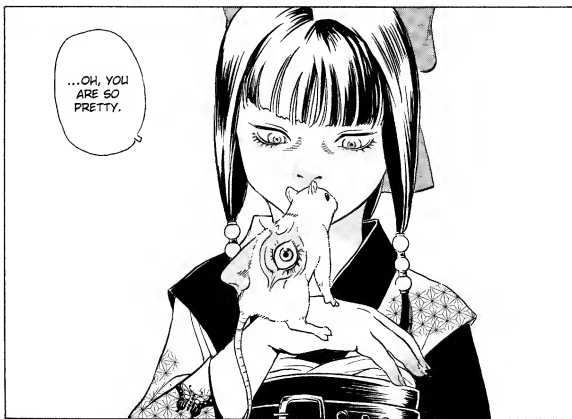
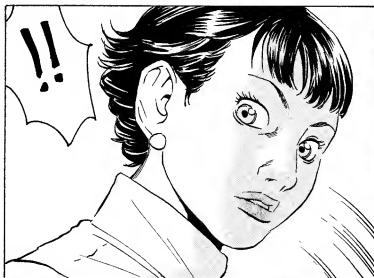
THEIR POTENTIAL IS
WIDELY SOUGHT FOR
ALL MANNER OF
MEDICAL TREATMENTS,
BUT WHAT WE'VE DONE
HERE IS PLACE MISS
KUROTANI'S DNA
WITHIN THEM, AND
GROW HER EARS.

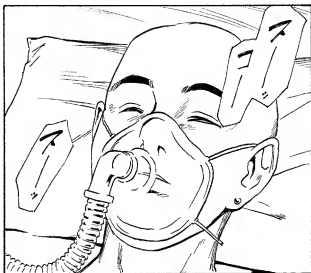
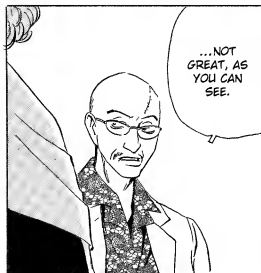
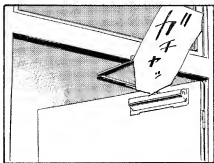
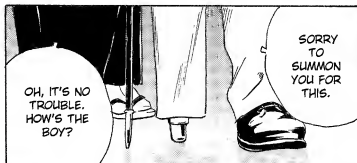
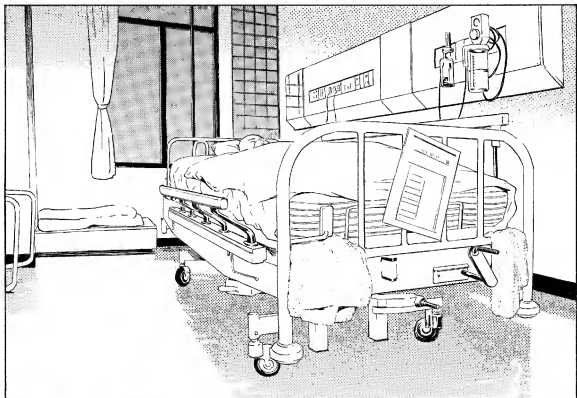


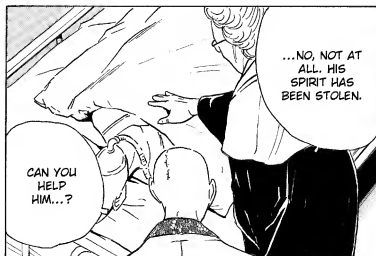








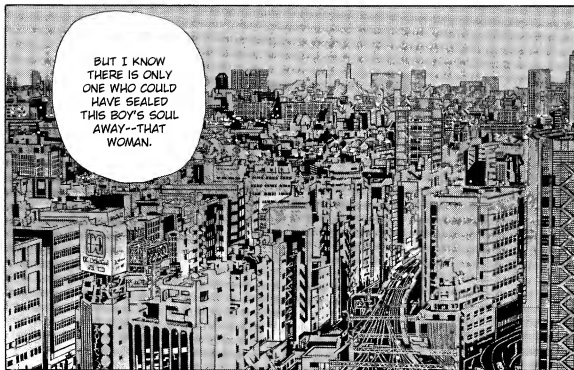




...NO, NOT AT ALL. HIS SPIRIT HAS BEEN STOLEN.



NO...
THERE'S
NOTHING I
CAN DO.



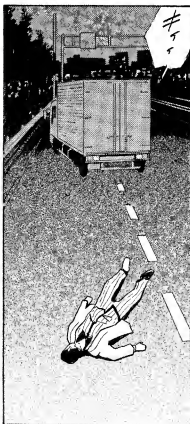
BUT I KNOW
THERE IS ONLY
ONE WHO COULD
HAVE SEALED
THIS BOY'S SOUL
AWAY--THAT
WOMAN.



私のしあわせパートⅡ

my happiness, part II

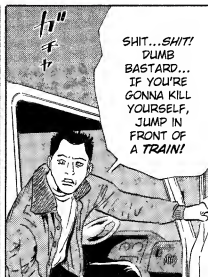






HE... HE
LOOKS
DEAD, BIG
BRO.

IS
HE--



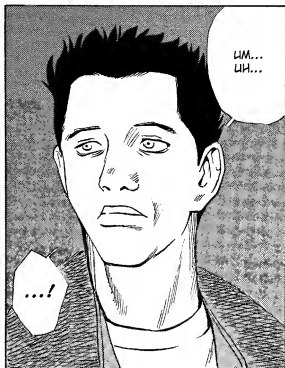
SHIT... SHIT!
DUMB
BASTARD...
IF YOU'RE
GONNA KILL
YOURSELF,
JUMP IN
FRONT OF
A TRAIN!



H.EY... NOT...
GO... NNA... PULL...
A HIT... AND...
RUN... ON ME..?



OKAY...
OKAY...
NOBODY'S
AROUND--
LET'S--



UM...
UH...

...!

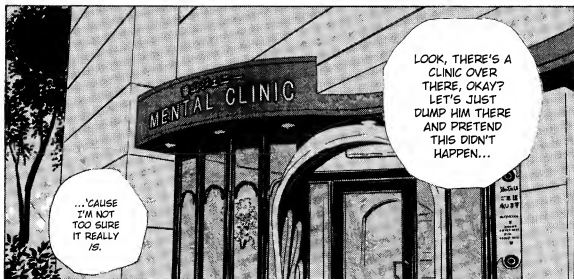


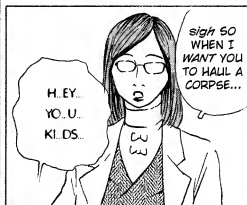
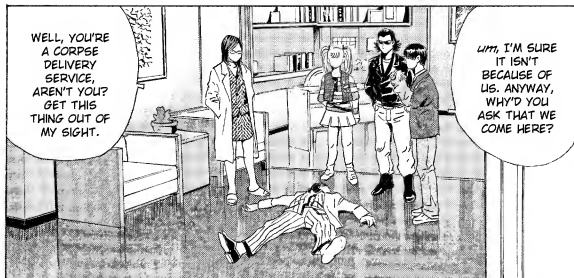
HU... RRY... UP...
AN... D... GE... T...
ME... TO... A...
HO... SP... TAL...
YO... U...
TRA... SH...

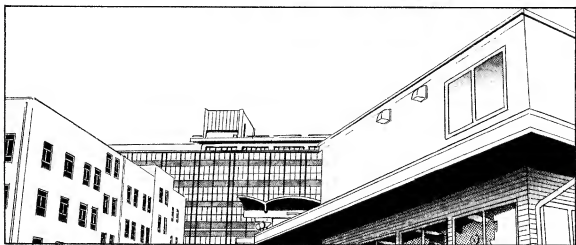
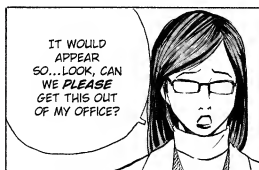


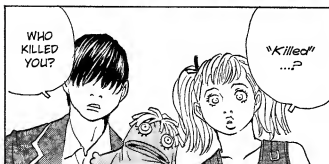
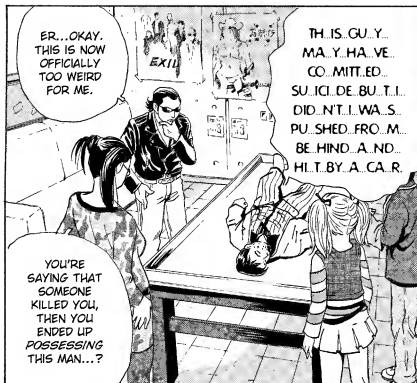
THOUGHT
YOU SAID
HE WAS
DEAD!

H-HOW CAN
HE BE ALIVE
WITH THAT
NECK,
MAN...?











WE...LL...I...
WA...S...D...EAD...
BU...T...I...
WAS...NT...
GON...E



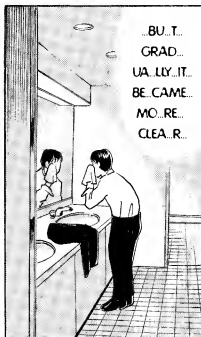
A...T...FIR...ST...I...
DID...NT...
UND...ER...STAND...
...WHA...T...HA...D...
...HAP...PENED...
TO...ME...



WHA...M...OUT...
O...F...NO...
WHERE...I...
THOU...GHT...I...
WA...S...DEA...D...
A...ND...
GO...NE...



...U...NTIL...
IT...WA...S...
STAR...ING...
RIGH...T...IN...
MY...FA...CE



...BU...T...
GRAD...
UA...L...Y...IT...
BE...CAME...
MO...RE...
CLEA...R...



B..UT..HE..
WOULD..N'T..
LIST..EN..HE..
START..ED..
TAK..ING..
PIL..LS..

I..KE..PT..TEL..LING..
THI..S..GU..Y..TO..
GO..LO..OK..FOR..
TH..E..RE..ST..OF..
MY..BO..DY..



...A..ND..
EVEN..TU..ALLY..
HE..WA..LKED..
RI..GH..T..IN..FRO..NT..
OF..A..TRU..CK..



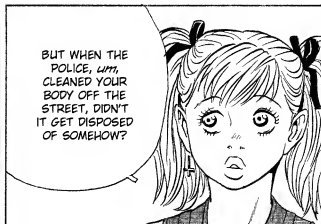
MY..EAR..S..A..RE..
SHO..WIN..G..UP..
A..LL..OVE..R..
TH..E..PLA..CE..
Y..OU..KNO..W?..
JU..ST..M..Y..EA..RS..

NO...ITS..
STILL..
AR..OUND..
I..CAN..
SEN..SE..IT..

*Voices
telling you
you've got
to go
on...they
don't
always
help.*



WELL,
YEAH...I CAN
SEE WHY HE
MIGHT HAVE
CONSIDERED
SUICIDE.



BUT WHEN THE
POLICE, UMM,
CLEANED YOUR
BODY OFF THE
STREET, DIDN'T
IT GET DISPOSED
OF SOMEHOW?



I...DOU...BT...
YO...U...KI...DS...
HA...VE...E...VER...
HEAR...D...OF...
ME...BU...T...I'M...
SAO...RI...
KU...RO...
TANI.



WAIT A
MOMENT
...

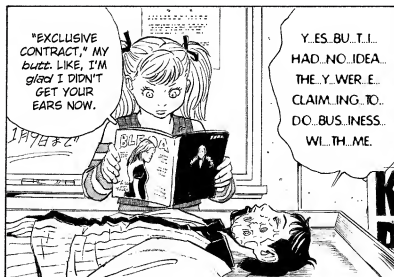
MA'AM...
WHAT'S
YOUR
NAME...?



...what?

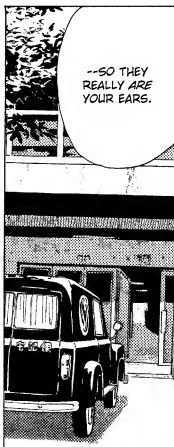


The beauty of Saori Kurotani can be yours...
COSMETIC SURGERY CLINIC
FOR AN APPOINTMENT
DIRECTION



"EXCLUSIVE
CONTRACT," MY
butt. LIKE, I'M
glad I DIDN'T
GET YOUR
EARS NOW.

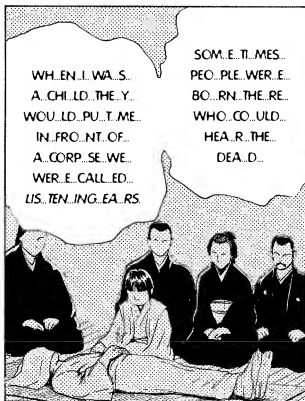
Y..ES..BU..T..I..
HAD..NO..IDEA..
THE..Y..WER.E..
CLAIM..ING..TO..
DO..BUS..INESS..
WI..TH..ME.



--SO THEY
REALLY ARE
YOUR EARS.



PLEA..SE..GE..T..MY..EAR..
S..BA..CK..FIN..D..MY..
BO..DY..I..BE..G..YO..U..I..
CA..N..HEAR..

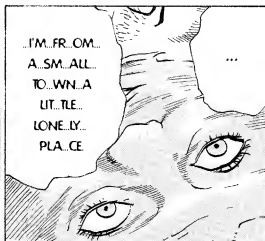


WH..EN..I..WA..S..
A..CHI..LD..THE..Y..
WO..UL..D..PU..T..ME..
IN..FRO..NT..OF..
A..CORP..SE..WE..
WER.E..CALL..ED..
US..TEN..ING..EA..RS

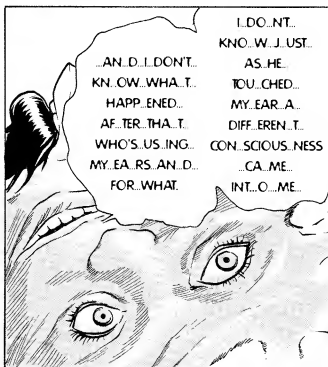
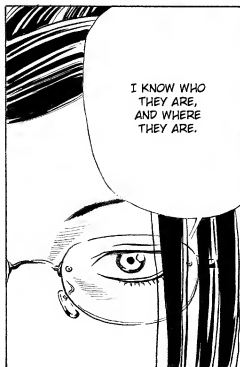
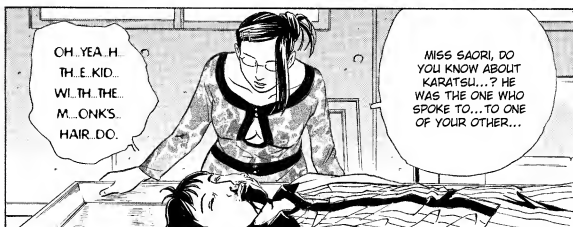
SOM.E..TI..MES..
PEO..PLE..WER.E..
BO..RN..THE..RE..
WHO..CO..ULD..
HEA..R..THE..
DEA..D..

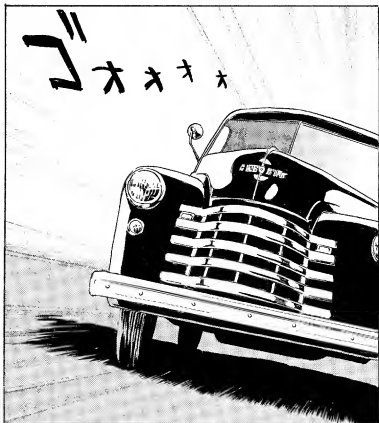


...What
CAN YOU
HEAR?



I..M..FR..OM..
A..SM..ALL..
TO..WN..A..
LIT..TLE..
LONE..LY..
PLA..CE



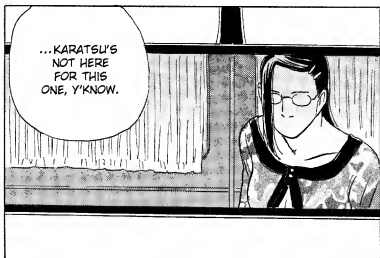


...LET'S
GO PAY
THEM A
VISIT.



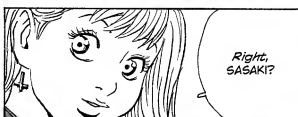
HM?

KINDA RARE
FOR SASAKI
TO COME OUT
TO THE
JOB SITE,
ISN'T IT...?

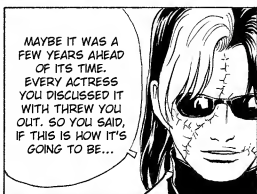


...KARATSU'S
NOT HERE
FOR THIS
ONE, Y'KNOW.

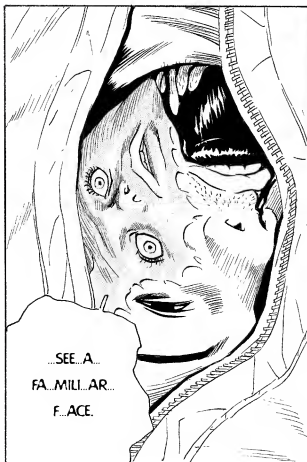
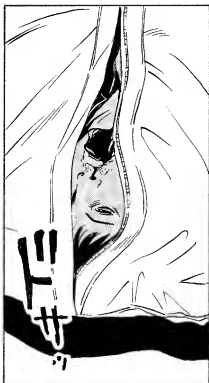
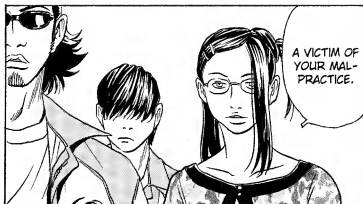














T...AKE...ANY...
THING...YOU...
WA...NT...BUT...
NOT...THA...T...



SO...I...GA...VE...
Y...OU...UP...DEN...IED...
THE...FRU...IT...OF...MY...
BO...DY...A...ND...
NOW...YO...U...TA...KE...
THE...FRUIT...
YO...URSELF...

...IT...WA...S...EA...RILY...
IN...MY...CA...REER...
AN...AFFA...IR...THE...Y...
SAID...I...HA...D...TO...
KEEP...IT...SE...CRET...



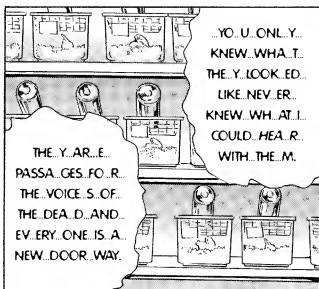
NO...BE...CAUSE...
THE...N...I...CAN...
NE...VER...REST...



NOT YOUR
EARS,
MOTHER?
BECAUSE
YOU WERE
SO PROUD
OF THEM?



...YOU GOTTA DESTROY THESE MICE. SURE, THEY'RE CUTE, BUT... ACTUALLY, THEY'RE NOT CUTE--



THE Y...AR...E PASSA_GES FO_R... THE VOICE_S OF... THE DE_A_D AND... EV_ERY ONE IS A NEW DOOR WAY.

...YO...U...ONL_Y... KNEW...WHA_T... THE Y...LOOK_ED... LIKE...NEV_ER... KNEW...WH...AT_I... COULD...HEA_R... WITH...THE_M.



FAKES?

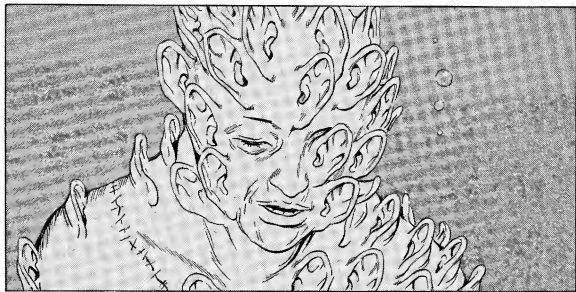
JUST AS YOU LIKE. THEY'RE ALL FAKES, IN ANY CASE.

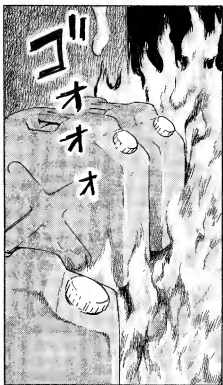
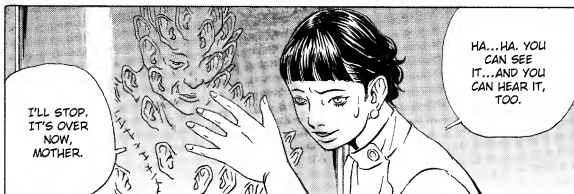


IN FACT, THE REAL EARS GROW BEST...



OH, THEY'RE EARS...JUST NOT HERES. I MADE THEM AS A SUFFICIENTLY BIZARRE TRUTH FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT SUSPECT THERE WAS MORE TO THIS THAN PLASTIC SURGERY.

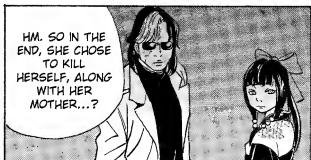




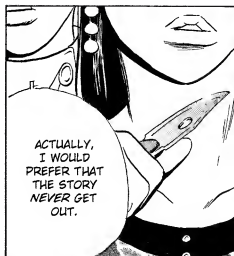


チ
フ
1

HM. SO IN THE
END, SHE CHOSE
TO KILL
HERSELF, ALONG
WITH HER
MOTHER...?



WELL, I
WOULDN'T
KNOW
ANYTHING...
ABOUT THAT.

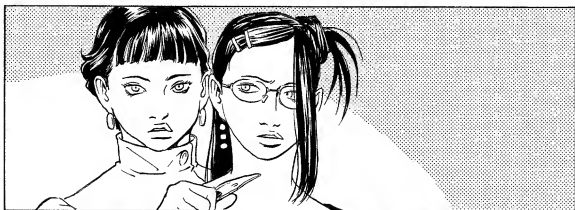


ACTUALLY,
I WOULD
PREFER THAT
THE STORY
NEVER GET
OUT.



MAN, THIS
IS TOO
HARDCORE!
A MOTHER-
DAUGHTER
SUICIDE PACT,
RIGHT OUT OF
THE BLUE!

KOFF
WHATEVER
THEY WANT!
LET'S GET
OUT...



...you
are not
making
any
sense...



...YOU MADE
HER LIKE
THAT...YOU
SHOWED HER
TO US...



H-HEY, WE'RE
DISCREET!
BELIEVE ME,
WE DON'T
TALK ABOUT
OUR WORK...

MUM'S
THE
WORD!
oops

THEY MUST
REMEMBER
HER AS
BEAUTIFUL...
NOT AS THIS
CREATURE...



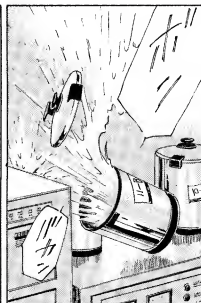
SHUT UP!
YOU DON'T
UNDER-
STAND--

...THIS ISN'T
MUCH OF A
THREAT. YOU
KNOW, I THINK
I'D RATHER
HAVE MY
THROAT CUT
THAN BURN TO
DEATH...



MA'AM,
CAN'T YOU
DO SOME-
THING?

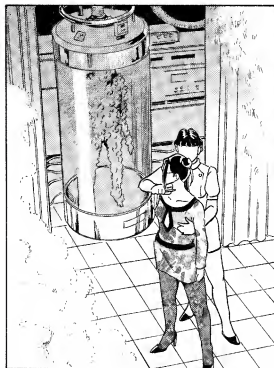
WE'VE GOT
MAYBE FIVE
MINUTES
LEFT IN
THIS OVEN!



EVERY ONE
IS A NEW
DOORWAY
...



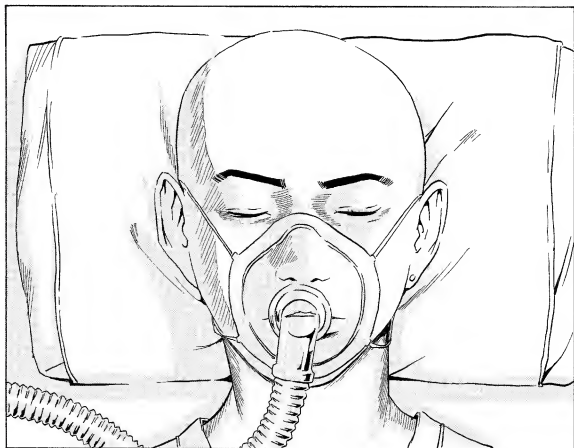
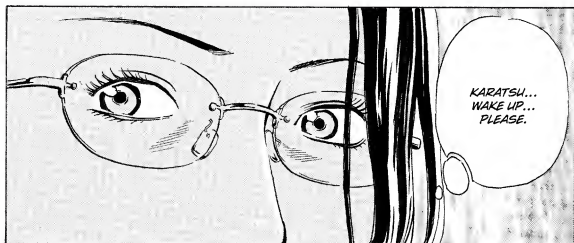
THAT...
CHILD...
WON'T...
LISTEN TO...
ANYONE...
NOW.

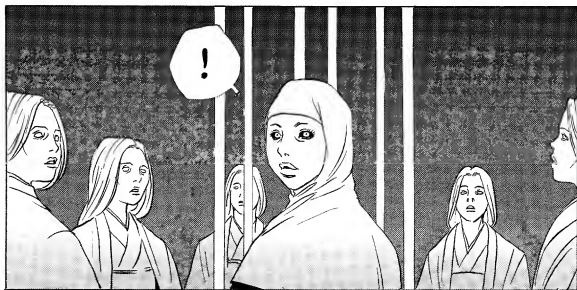
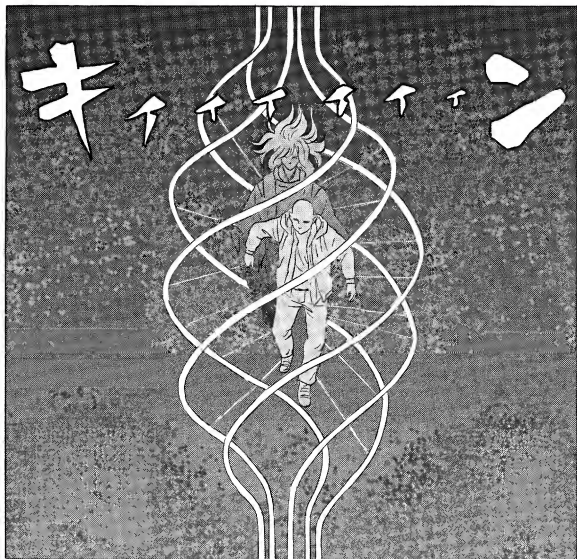


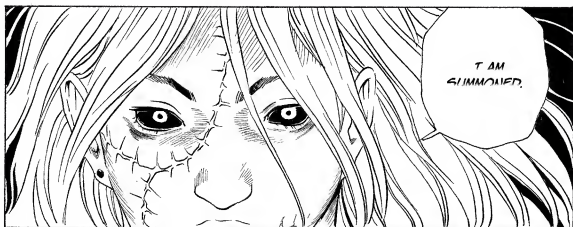
I'LL
KILL
YOU...

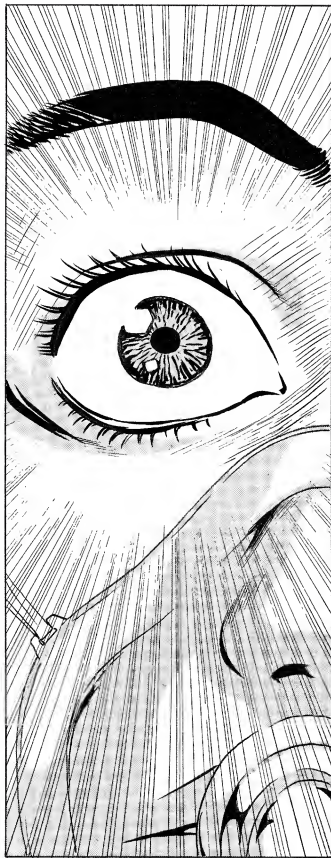


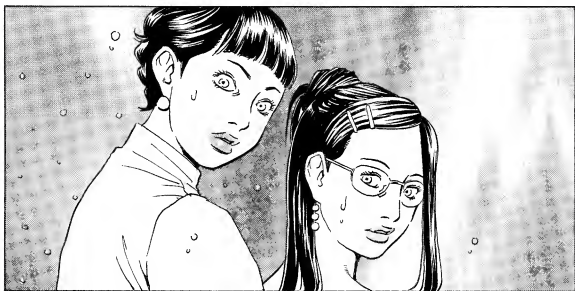
ゴッ...

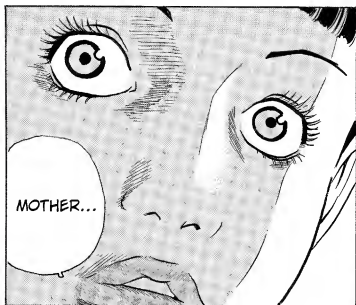






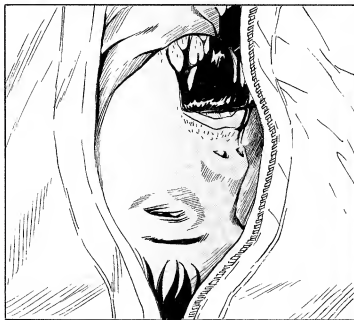








KA...ORI...
S...TOP...
TH...IS...





WA.IT..
TA..KE..THI..S..
CHIL.D..
WIT..H..
YO..U..



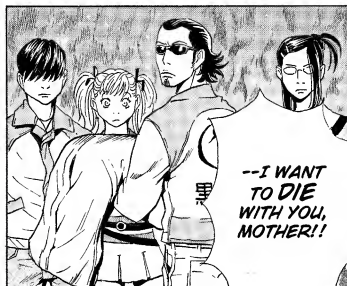
HER SPIRIT'S
FREE NOW.
C'MON, SASAKI,
LET'S GET OUT
OF HERE!

R-RIGHT...

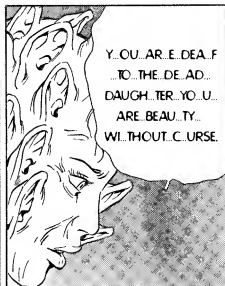


I..SEN..T..
YO..U..
AWA..Y..
TO..LI..VE..

NO!
PLEASE
DON'T MAKE
ME GO!
I WANT
TO STAY
WITH
YOU,
MOTHER
--

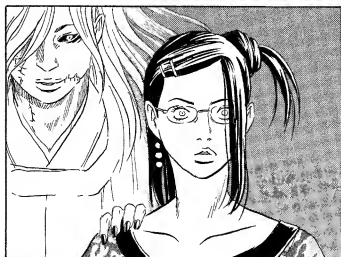
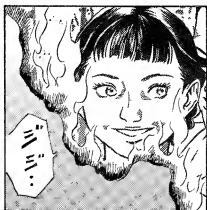


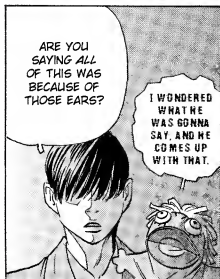
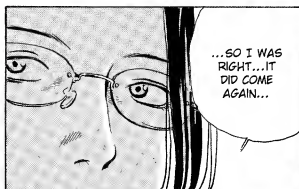
--I WANT
TO DIE
WITH YOU,
MOTHER!!

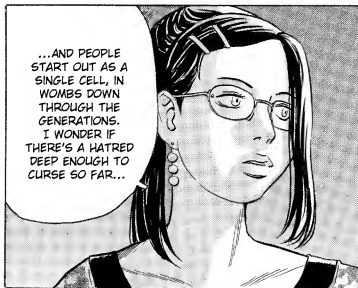


Y..OU..AR..E..DEA.F..
..TO..THE..DE..AD..
DAUGH..TER..YO..U..
ARE BEAU..TY..
WI..THOUT..C..URSE.

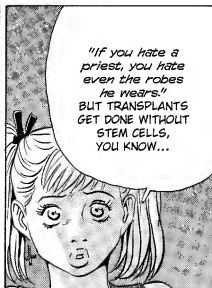








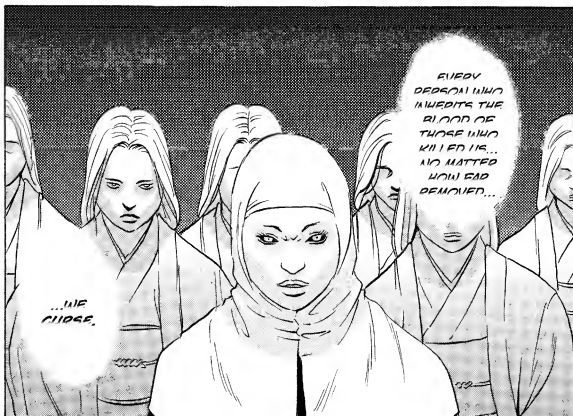
...AND PEOPLE
START OUT AS A
SINGLE CELL, IN
WOMBS DOWN
THROUGH THE
GENERATIONS.
I WONDER IF
THERE'S A HATRED
DEEP ENOUGH TO
CURSE SO FAR...



"If you hate a
priest, you hate
even the robes
he wears."
BUT TRANSPLANTS
GET DONE WITHOUT
STEM CELLS,
YOU KNOW...

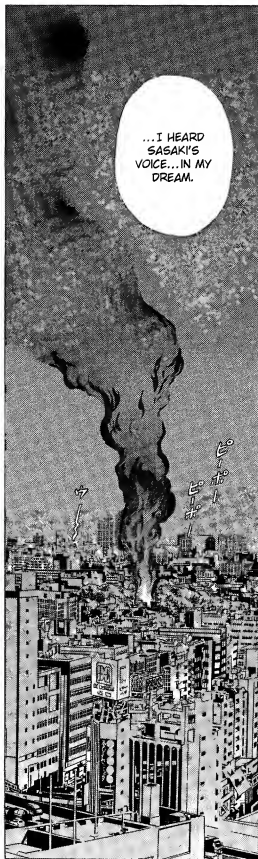


THERE IS.



...THE
CHOICE.

EVERY
DEEDS THAT
INHERITS THE
BLOOD OF
THOSE WHO
KILLED US...
AND MATTER
HOW FAR
REMOVED...

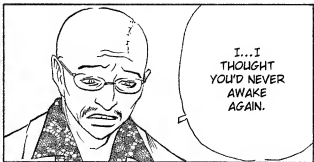


...I HEARD
SASAKI'S
VOICE...IN MY
DREAM.



KARATSU...
HOW ARE
YOU?

...



I...I
THOUGHT
YOU'D NEVER
AWAKE
AGAIN.



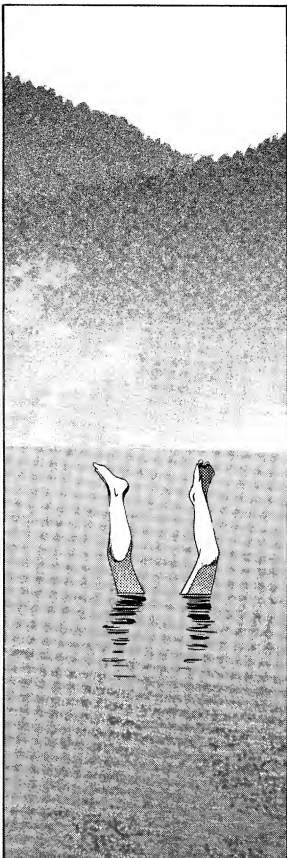
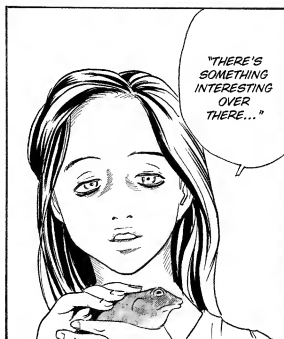
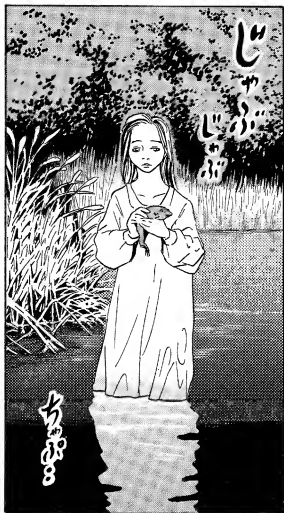
SHE
CALLED
ME...

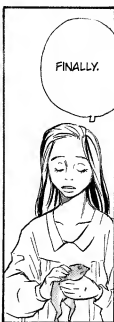
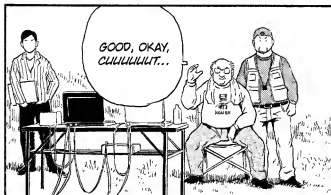
4th delivery

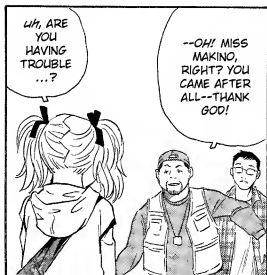
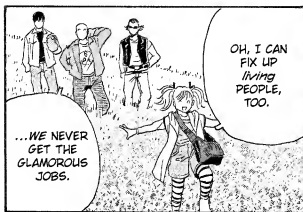
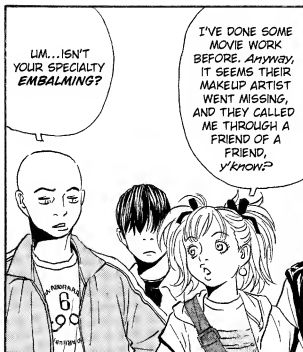
下シ
わたしの首領

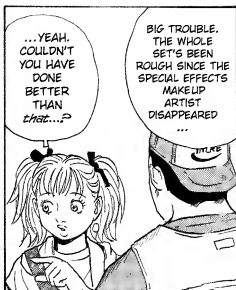
my don

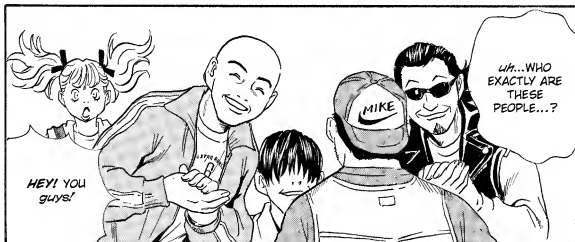
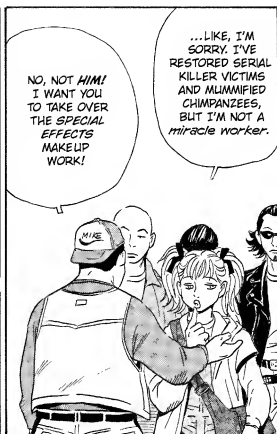
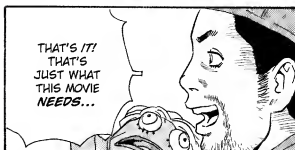
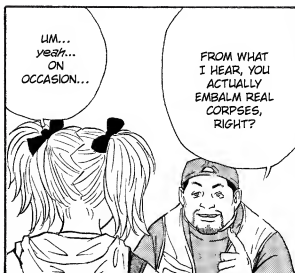


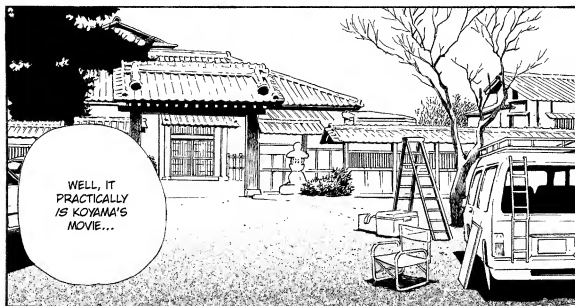
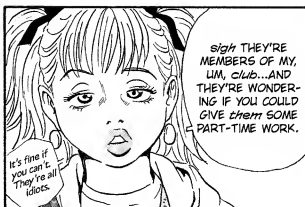








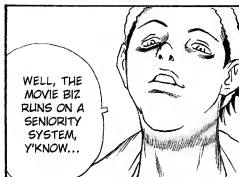




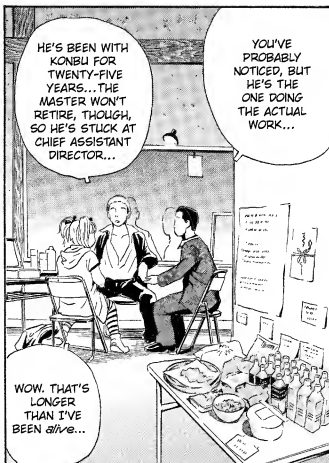


SO, GETTING
TO BE A
DIRECTOR IS
PRETTY
HARD, HUH?

*Lift your
chin a bit,
please.*



WELL, THE
MOVIE BIZ
RUNS ON A
SENIORITY
SYSTEM,
Y'KNOW...



HE'S BEEN WITH
KONBU FOR
TWENTY-FIVE
YEARS...THE
MASTER WON'T
RETIRE, THOUGH,
SO HE'S STUCK AT
CHIEF ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR...

YOU'VE
PROBABLY
NOTICED, BUT
HE'S THE
ONE DOING
THE ACTUAL
WORK...

WOW. THAT'S
LONGER
THAN I'VE
BEEN alive...



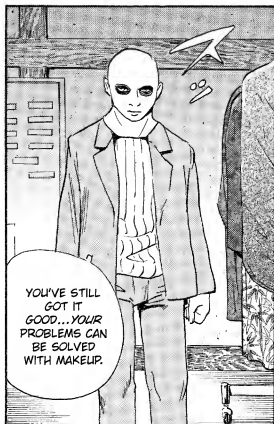
MAN, WHEN DO
WE GET TO DO
SOME DIRECTING?
I'M STARTING TO
THINK WE'RE
JUST GOFERS!

HEY! YOU
KIDS!
HURRY UP
OVER THERE!



...PEOPLE GET
AROUND THAT BY
BREAKING INTO
MOVIES FROM
SOME RELATED
FIELD, LIKE ACTING,
OR MAKING
COMMERCIALS...

...BUT TO SEE
PEOPLE LIKE
THAT WITHOUT
HIS KIND OF
EXPERIENCE GET
CALLED "FILM
DIRECTORS"
CAN'T BE ANY
FUN FOR HIM.

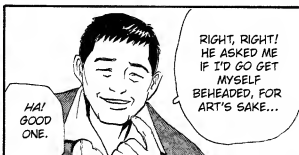


YOU'VE STILL GOT IT GOOD...YOUR PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED WITH MAKEUP.



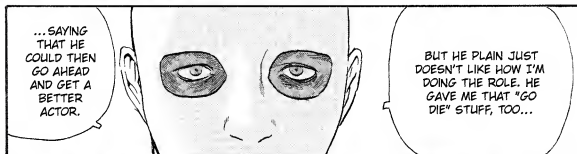
YOU'VE REALLY SAVED US. THIS SCENE WASN'T GOING WELL... TOWARDS THE END, HE STARTED SAYING STUFF LIKE, "WHY DON'T YOU REALLY DIE?"

--I MEAN, KOYAMA TOOK THE LEAD TO BRING YOU IN, TOO, MAKINO.



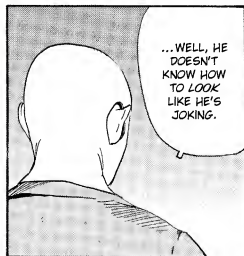
HA! GOOD ONE.

RIGHT, RIGHT! HE ASKED ME IF I'D GO GET MYSELF BEHEADED, FOR ART'S SAKE...

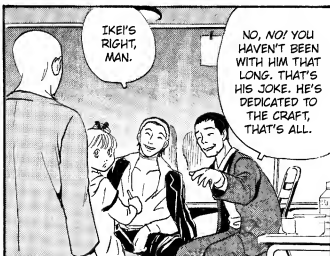


...SAYING THAT HE COULD THEN GO AHEAD AND GET A BETTER ACTOR.

BUT HE PLAIN JUST DOESN'T LIKE HOW I'M DOING THE ROLE. HE GAVE ME THAT "GO DIE" STUFF, TOO...



...WELL, HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO LOOK LIKE HE'S JOKING.



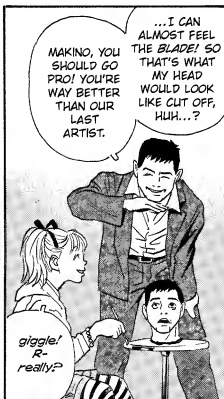
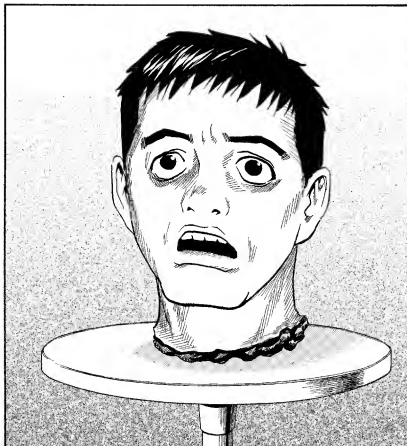
IKEI'S RIGHT, MAN.

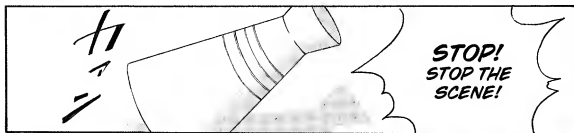
NO, NO! YOU HAVEN'T BEEN WITH HIM THAT LONG. THAT'S HIS JOKE. HE'S DEDICATED TO THE CRAFT, THAT'S ALL.

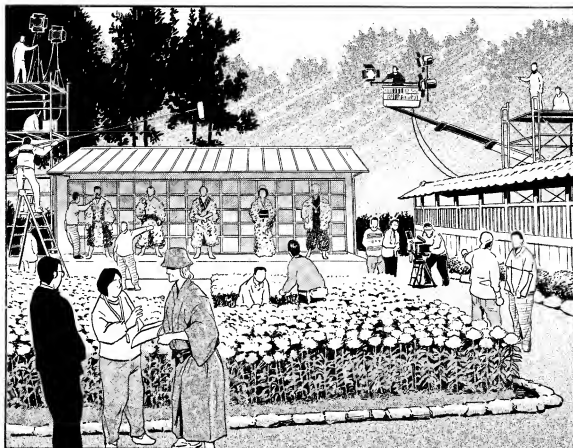


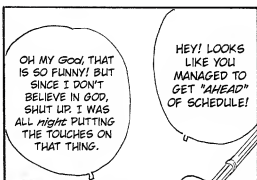


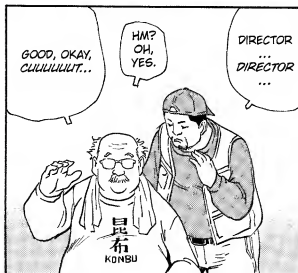




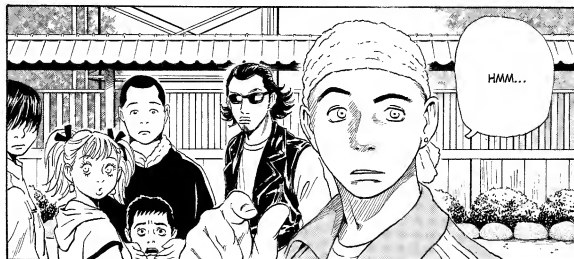
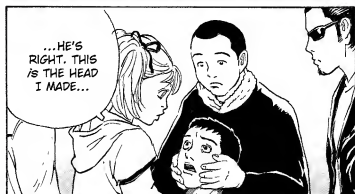










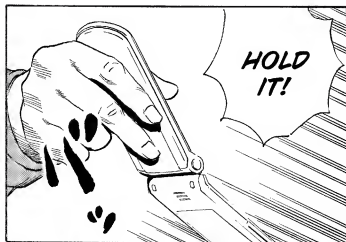




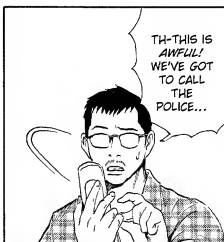
...THEN I
GUESS WE
CAN RULE
OUT SPECIAL
EFFECTS.

狼なんか怖くない

i'm not afraid of the big bad wolf



**HOLD
IT!**



TH-THIS IS
AWFUL!
WE'VE GOT
TO CALL
THE
POLICE...



B-BUT...
IT'S
MURDER!

NOT YET! YOU
THINK THEY'D
LET US KEEP
FILMING IF WE
CALLED THIS
IN NOW?



HEY, YOU
GUYS...
COME HERE
A SECOND.

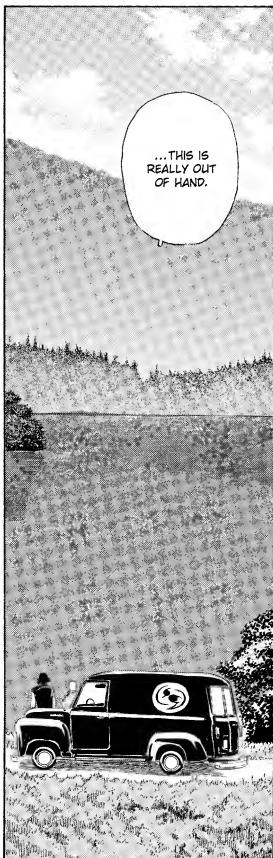
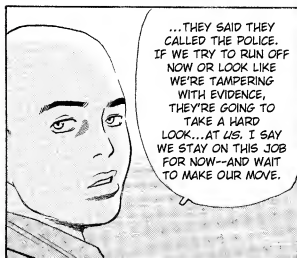
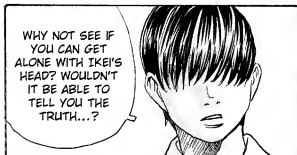
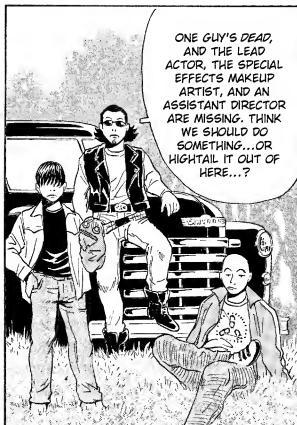


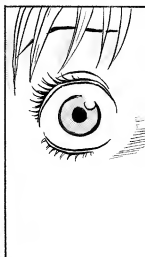
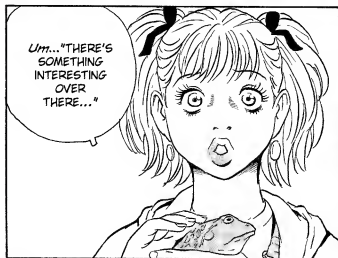
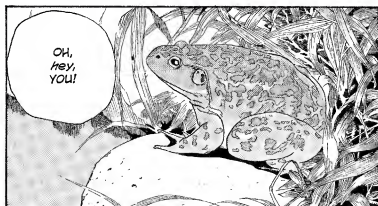
HE'S NOT GOING TO
BE ANY LESS DEAD
IF WE WAIT A FEW
HOURS. COME
ON--ALL WE'VE GOT
LEFT TO FINISH IS
THE SCENE WHERE
TAKEKIYO TAKES
OFF HIS MASK.

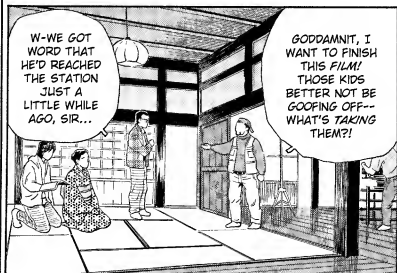
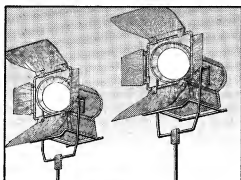
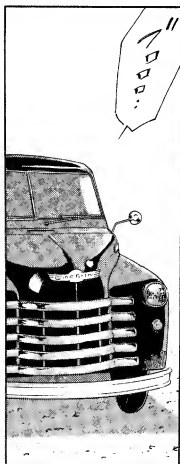


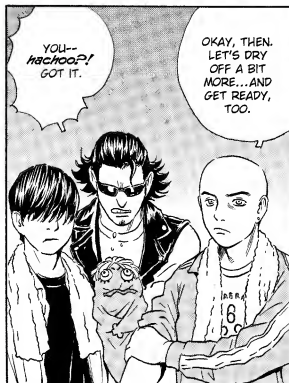
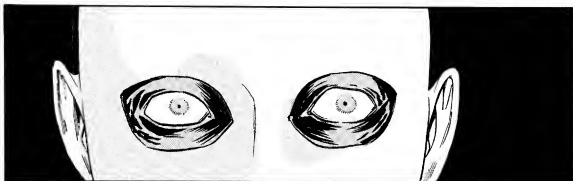
HE UNDERSTOOD
MY DEDICATION.
I'M **NOT** GOING TO
HAVE THIS SHUT
DOWN WHEN WE'RE
SO CLOSE. TELL
THEM YOU CALLED
ALREADY...AND
PRETTY SOON, IT
WON'T MATTER.

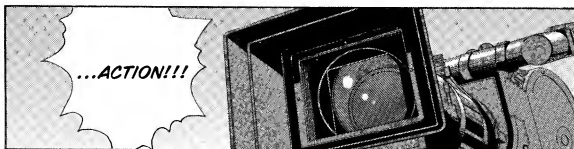
BUT...

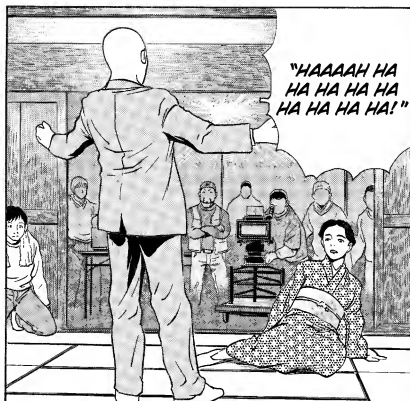


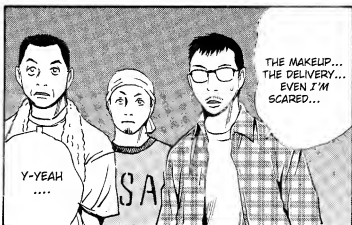
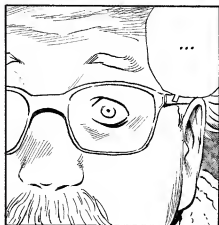








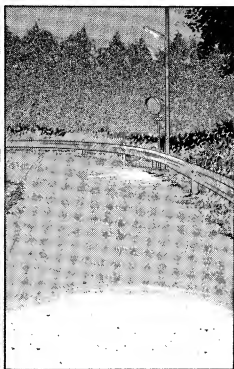
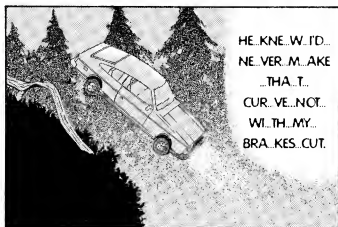
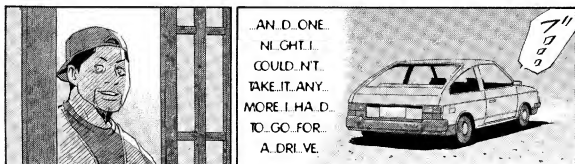
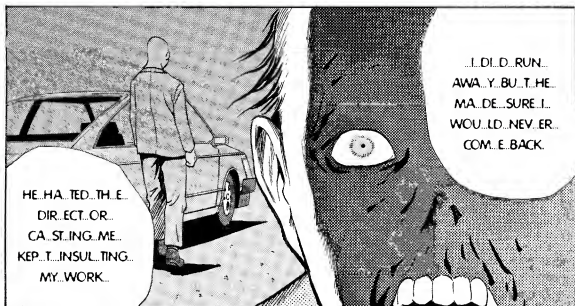




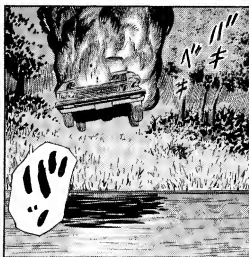


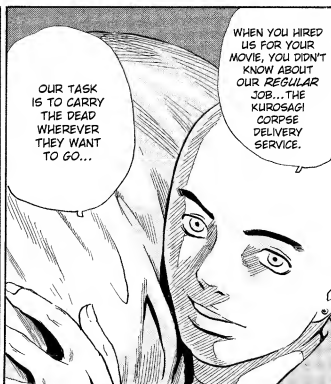


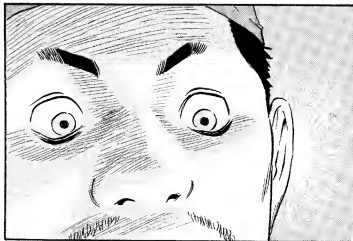




...I...HAD...TIME...
TO...FEEL...THE...
FLAMES...
BE...FORE...
I...DIE...D...







5th delivery: I'm not afraid of the big bad wolf—the end

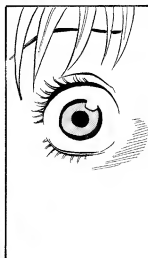
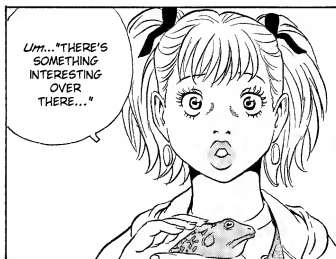


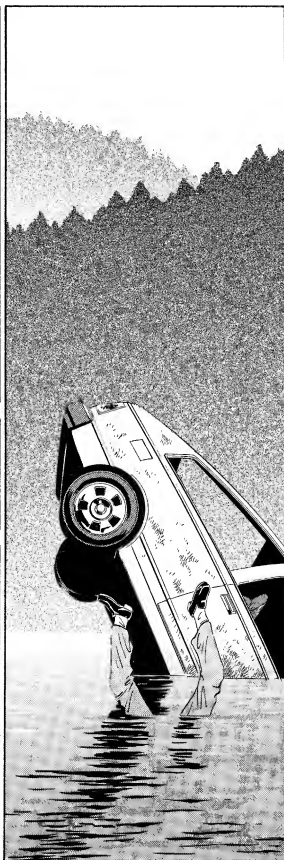
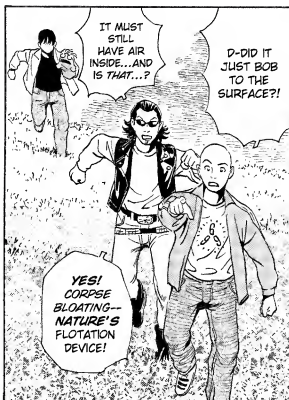


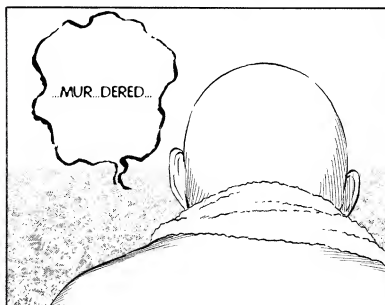
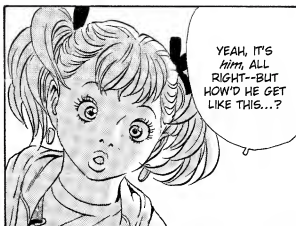
sunday is a stranger

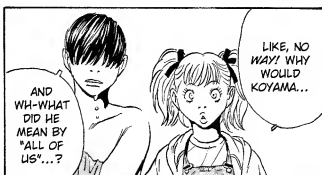
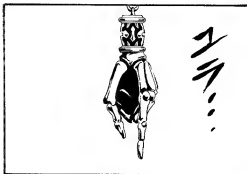
日曜日はストレンジャー

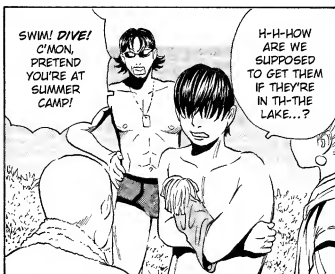


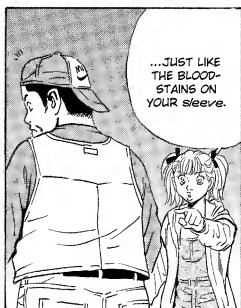
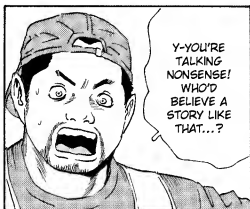
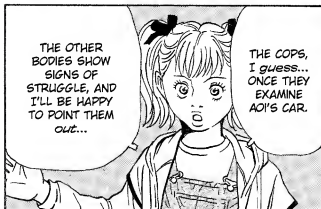


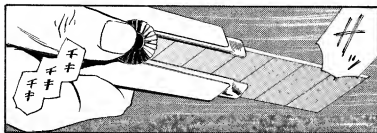






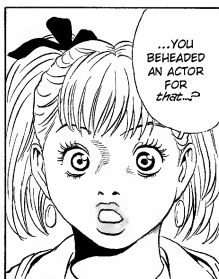




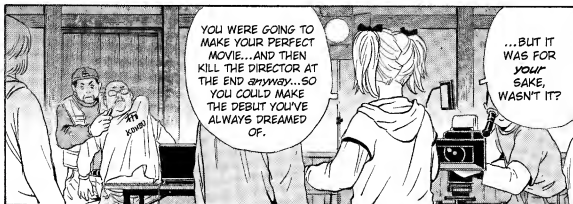




I WOULD EVISCERATE AN ACTOR FOR THAT...AND USE THEIR GUTS TO GREASE THE CAMERA DOLLY! WHAT ARE THEY HERE FOR--IF NOT FOR THE SAKE OF THE FILM?



...YOU BEHEADED AN ACTOR FOR THAT...?

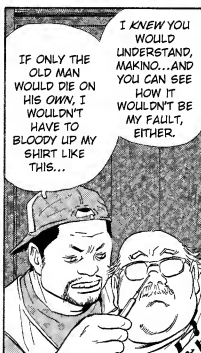


YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE YOUR PERFECT MOVIE...AND THEN KILL THE DIRECTOR AT THE END *anyway*...SO YOU COULD MAKE THE DEBUT YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF.

...BUT IT WAS FOR *YOUR* SAKE, WASN'T IT?



LET HIM GO... THERE'S NO POINT ANYMORE...



IF ONLY THE OLD MAN WOULD DIE ON HIS OWN, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BLOODY UP MY SHIRT LIKE THIS...

I KNEW YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND, MAKINO...AND YOU CAN SEE HOW IT WOULDN'T BE MY FAULT, EITHER.



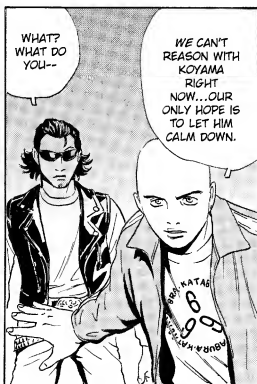
SHUT UP, DEAD MAN!



DO YOU KNOW
HOW LONG I'VE
PRACTICED
SLASHING IN THE
AIR...HOW I
WOULD CUT HIM
UP LIKE
THIS...LIKE
THAT...



--I SEE.
OKAY!
LISTEN
UP!
EVERY-
ONE,
LET'S
JUST
LEAVE HIM
ALONE!



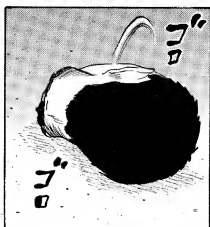
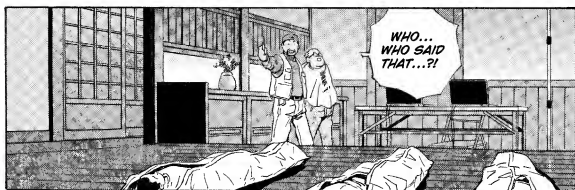
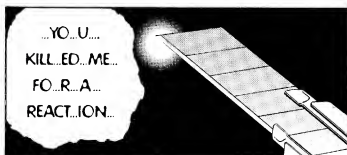
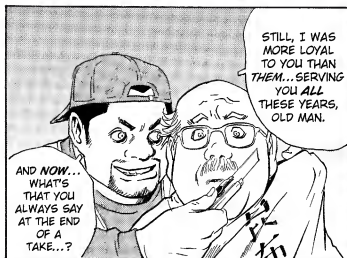
WHAT?
WHAT DO
YOU--

WE CAN'T
REASON WITH
KOYAMA
RIGHT
NOW...OUR
ONLY HOPE IS
TO LET HIM
CALM DOWN.



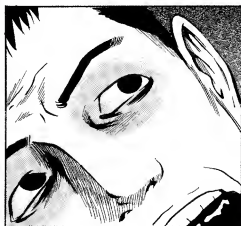
ALONE?
B-BUT...

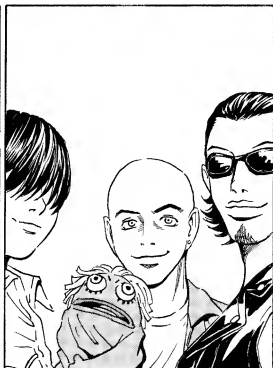
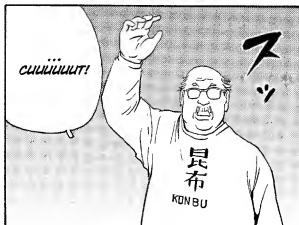
ALONE
WITH THE
DEAD.











HELL! LET'S
JUST THROW
THE WHOLE
REMAKE OUT!
WE'RE GOING TO
MAKE A BRAND
NEW MOVIE OUT
OF THIS...AND
CALL IT...

GREAT!
THAT WAS
JUST
GREAT!

DIR..ECT..
OR...?

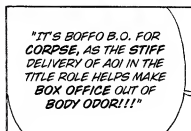


NOW
THAT WAS
TRUE TO
LIFE!

I'M GETTING AN
INSPIRATION...
YES! WE'LL
REWRITE THE
SCRIPT...CHANGE
THE CAST...







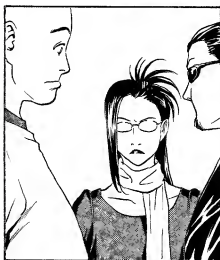


THEY'RE GOING TO BE DISAPPOINTED. EVEN IF THEY DON'T THINK ONE'S NECESSARY IN THIS BUSINESS-- THE CLIENT'S SOUL HAS ALREADY PASSED...ON THE PART.

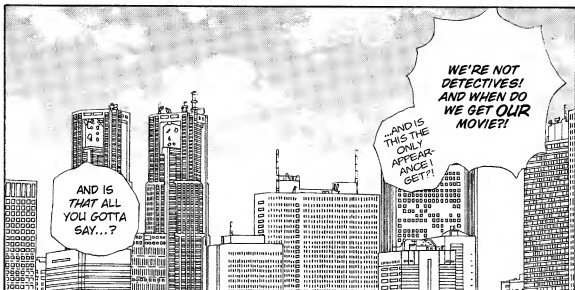


--HEY! SO YOU DID DECIDE TO BECOME HIS AGENT?

NAH. THE STUDIO EXECUTIVES HAD HIM PLACED IN A MEAT LOCKER. THEY WANT ME TO TALK TO HIM AGAIN...



STILL, THERE'S ONE THING I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH.



AND IS THAT ALL YOU GOTTA SAY...?

...AND IS THIS THE ONLY APPEARANCE I GET?!

WE'RE NOT DETECTIVES! AND WHEN DO WE GET OUR MOVIE?!

the KUROSAgi corpse delivery service

黒鷲死体宅配便

eiji otsuka 大塚英志 housui yamazaki 山崎峰水

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English-language version

produced by Dark Horse Comics

THE KUROSAgi CORPSE DELIVERY SERVICE VOL. 7

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DISJECTA MEMBRA

SOUND FX GLOSSARY AND NOTES ON *KUROSAGI* VOL. 7 BY TAYLOR ENGEL AND TOSHIFUMI YOSHIDA

Introduction and additional comments by the editor

TO INCREASE YOUR ENJOYMENT of the distinctive Japanese visual style of this manga, we've included a guide to the sound effects (or "FX") used in this manga. It is suggested the reader *not* constantly consult this glossary as they read through, but regard it as supplemental information, in the manner of footnotes. If you want to imagine it being read aloud by Osaka, after the manner of her lecture to Sakaki on hemorrhoids in episode five of *Azumanga Daioh*, please go right ahead. In either Yuki Matsuoka or Kira Vincent-Davis's voice—I like them both.

Japanese, like English, did not independently invent its own writing system, but instead borrowed and modified the system used by then-dominant cultural power in their part of the world. We still call the letters we use to write English today the "Roman" alphabet, for the simple reason that about 1600 years ago the earliest English speakers, living on the frontier of the Roman Empire, began to use the same letters the Romans used for their Latin language to write out English.

Around that very same time, on the other side of the planet, Japan, like England, was another example of an island civilization lying across the sea from a great empire, in this case, that of China. Likewise the Japanese borrowed from the Chinese writing system, which then, as now, consisted of thousands of complex symbols—today in China officially referred to in the Roman alphabet as *hanzi*, but which the Japanese pronounce as *kanji*. For example,

all the Japanese characters you see on the front cover of *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*—the seven which make up the original title and the four each which make up the creators' names—are examples of kanji. Of course, all of them were hanzi first—although the Japanese did also invent some original kanji of their own, just as new hanzi have been created over the centuries as Chinese evolved.

(Note that whereas both *kanji* and *hanzi* are examples of writing foreign words in Roman letters, "kanji" gives English speakers a fairly good idea of how the Japanese word is really pronounced—*khan-gee*—whereas "hanzi" does not—in Mandarin Chinese it sounds something like *n-tsu*. The reason is fairly simple: whereas the most commonly used method of writing Japanese in Roman letters, called the Hepburn system, was developed by a native English speaker, the most commonly used method of writing Chinese in Roman letters, called the Pinyin system, was developed by native Mandarin speakers. In fact, Pinyin was developed to help teach Mandarin pronunciation to speakers of other Chinese dialects; unlike Hepburn, it was not intended as a learning tool for English speakers per se, and hence has no particular obligation to "make sense" to English speakers or, indeed, users of the many other languages spelled with the Roman alphabet.)

Whereas the various dialects of Chinese are written entirely in hanzi, it is impractical to render the Japanese language entirely in them. To compare once more, English

is a notoriously difficult language in which to spell properly, and this is in part because it uses an alphabet designed for another language, Latin, whose sounds are different (this is, of course, putting aside the fact the sounds of both languages experienced change over time). The challenges the Japanese faced in using the Chinese writing system for their own language were even greater, for whereas spoken English and Latin are at least from a common language family, spoken Japanese is unrelated to any of the various dialects of spoken Chinese. The complicated writing system that Japanese evolved represents an adjustment to these great differences.

When the Japanese borrowed hanzi to become kanji, what they were getting was a way to write out (remember, they already had ways to say) their vocabulary. Nouns, verbs, many adjectives, the names of places and people—that's what kanji are used for, the fundamental data of the written language. The practical use and processing of that "data"—its grammar and pronunciation—is another matter entirely. Because spoken Japanese neither sounds nor functions like Chinese, the first work-around tried was a system called *manyogana*, where individual kanji were picked to represent certain syllables in Japanese. A similar method is still used in Chinese today to spell out foreign names; companies and individuals often try to choose hanzi for this purpose that have an auspicious, or at least not insulting, meaning. As you will also observe in *Kurosagi* and elsewhere, the meaning behind the characters that make up a personal name are an important literary element of Japanese as well.

The commentary in *Katsuya Terada's The Monkey King* (also available from Dark

Horse, and also translated by Toshifumi Yoshida) notes the importance that not only Chinese, but also Indian culture had on Japan at this time in history—particularly through Buddhism. Similarly, in Western history at this time, religious communities in Asia were associated with learning, since priests and monks were more likely to be literate than other groups in society. It is believed the Northeast Indian *Siddham* script studied by Kukai (died 835 AD), founder of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism, inspired him to create the solution for writing Japanese still used today. Kukai is credited with the idea of taking the manyogana and making shorthand versions of them—which are now known simply as *kana*. The improvement in efficiency was dramatic: a kanji, used previously to represent a sound, that might have taken a dozen strokes to draw, was now reduced to three or four.

Unlike the original kanji they were based on, the new kana had *only* a sound meaning. And unlike the thousands of kanji, there are only forty-six kana, which can be used to spell out any word in the Japanese language, including the many ordinarily written with kanji (Japanese keyboards work on this principle). The same set of forty-six kana is written two different ways depending on their intended use: cursive style, *hiragana*, and block style, *katakana*. Naturally, sound FX in manga are almost always written out using kana.

Kana work somewhat differently than the Roman alphabet. For example, while there are separate kana for each of the five vowels (the Japanese order is not A-E-I-O-U as in English, but A-I-U-E-O), there are, except for "n," no separate kana for consonants (the middle "n" in the word *ninja* illustrates this exception). Instead, kana

work by grouping together consonants with vowels: for example, there are five kana for sounds starting with “k,” depending on which vowel follows it—in Japanese vowel order, they go KA, KI, KU, KE, KO. The next set of kana begins with “s” sounds, so SA, SHI, SU, SE, SO, and so on. You will observe this kind of consonant-vowel pattern in the FX listings for *Kurosagi* Vol. 7 below.

Katakana are almost always the kind that get used for manga sound FX, but on occasion hiragana are used instead. This is commonly done when the sound is one associated with a human body, but can be a subtler aesthetic choice by the artist as well. In *Kurosagi* Vol. 7 you can see an example on 43.5, with the HYUBA swish-strike of the sword, which in hiragana style is written ひゅばっ. Note its more cursive appearance compared to the other FX. If it had been written in katakana style, it would look like ヒュバツ.

To see how to use this glossary, take an example from page 8: “8.4 FX: BON—sound of something exploding under hood.” 8.4 means the FX is the one on page 8, in panel 4. BON is the sound these kana—ボンツ—literally stand for. After the dash comes an explanation of what the sound represents (in some cases, it will be less obvious than others). Note that in cases where there are two or more different sounds in a single panel, an extra number is used to differentiate them from right to left; or, in cases where right and left are less clear, in clockwise order.

The use of kana in these FX also illustrates another aspect of written Japanese—its flexible reading order. For example, the way you’re reading the pages and panels of this book in general: going from right to left, and from top to bottom—is similar to the

order in which Japanese is also written in most forms of print: books, magazines, and newspapers. However, many of the FX in *Kurosagi* (and manga in general) read left to right. This kind of flexibility is also to be found on Japanese web pages, which usually also read left to right. In other words, Japanese doesn’t simply read “the other way” from English; the Japanese themselves are used to reading it in several different directions.

As might be expected, some FX “sound” short, and others “sound” long. Manga represent this in different ways. One of many instances of “short sounds” in *Kurosagi* Vol. 7 is to be found in the example from 43.5 given above: HYUBA. See the small ツ mark it has at the end—note again that this is the hiragana “tsu,” and you will far more often see it in its katakana form, ツ, as (for example) in the other above example, 8.4’s BON. This mark ordinarily represents the sound “tsu,” but its half-size use at the end of FX like this means the sound is the kind which stops or cuts off suddenly; that’s why the sound is written as BON and not BONTSU—you don’t “pronounce” the TSU in such cases. Note the small “tsu” has another occasional use *inside*, rather than at the end, of a particular FX, where it indicates a doubling of the consonant sound that follows it.

There are three different ways you may see “long sounds”—where a vowel sound is extended—written out as FX. One is with an ellipsis, as in 6.2.1’s BURORORO. Another is with an extended line, as in 78.3’s SUU KOO. Still another is by simply repeating a vowel several times, as in 69.5’s KIIIIIIIIIN. You will note that the KOO in 78.3’s SUU KOO has a “tsu” at its end, suggesting an elongated sound that’s suddenly cut off; the methods may be

combined within a single FX. As a visual element in manga, FX are an art rather than a science, and are used in a less rigorous fashion than kana are in standard written Japanese.

The explanation of what the sound represents may sometimes be surprising, but every culture “hears” sounds differently. Note that manga FX do not even necessarily represent literal sounds. Such “mimetic” words, which represent an imagined sound, or even a state of mind, are called *gitaigo* in Japanese. Like the onomatopoeic *giseigo* (the words used to represent literal sounds—i.e., most FX in this glossary are classed as *giseigo*), they are also used in colloquial speech and writing. A Japanese, for example, might say that something bounced by saying PURIN, or talk about eating by saying MUGU MUGU. It’s something like describing chatter in English by saying “yadda yadda yadda” instead.

One important last note: all these spelled-out kana vowels should be pronounced as they are in Japanese: “A” as *ah*, “I” as *eee*, “U” as *ooh*, “E” as *eh*, and “O” as *oh*.

2.1 We’re back to once again having song titles for this volume. This time around, they’re all singles from Mako Ishino between 1978 and 1981. Although she began her career as an idol singer, Ishino has moved on to become an actor since her last single was released in 1987. She’s appeared in TV series and movies, including a number based off manga, such as *Ping Pong* (as Player A’s mom), *Boys Over Flowers* (as Tsukushi’s mom) and *Dance Till Tomorrow* (as Shimomura). The translator notes, by the way, that the title of “1st Delivery”

could be alternately rendered as “Challenge of My Heart,” and “6th Delivery”’s as “A Stranger Called Sunday.”

6.2.1 FX/balloon: BURORORO—engine sound

6.2.2 FX/balloon: KI—car brake sound. “Pure Land,” *jodo* in Japanese, is a reference to a popular form of Buddhism as practiced in East Asia (in Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka the doctrine is less common) that stresses salvation through faith and prayer to the incarnation of the Buddha named Amitabha. This is in contrast to the “classic” practice of Buddhism, in which salvation depends on the individual’s own effort toward proper works and mindfulness. Pure Land Buddhists believe that Amitabha perceived that worldly existence is so corrupt as to stand in the way of most beings’ personal enlightenment, so he created a pure land as a sanctuary that souls might reach after death by having faith in Amitabha, known as *Amida* in Japanese. To reach the pure land after death is not the same thing as achieving final enlightenment, but it is believed to be a place where all souls can and will receive enlightenment, as opposed to the uncertainty and suffering of being reborn into the ordinary world.

7.2 No, you’re not imagining things—Karatsu is back to more or less normal after Vol. 6’s cliffhanger, with no explanation as to what happened to him between then and now. We are assured Eiji

Otsuka will explain this . . . in good time, reader, in good time.

- 8.2 In case you're wondering *what was therein inhum'd* (to quote H. P. Lovecraft) in a Japanese cemetery such as this one, the answer is, of course, the ashes of the dead, which take up much less space than an actual body.
- 8.4.1 **FX: BON**—sound of something exploding under hood
- 8.4.2 **FX/balloon: MOWA**—sound of smoke starting to come out
- 10.2 **FX/balloon: PETA**—applying heating/cooling patch
- 10.3 As you might guess, these are heating/cooling patches for shoulder aches and back pain. Harix brand company homepage, yo: <http://www.harix.jp/>.
- 12.1.1 **FX/balloon: GASHA**—sound of shifting metal
- 12.1.2 **FX/balloon: GASHA**—sound of shifting metal
- 12.3 **FX/balloon: GA**—grabbing sound
- 12.4.1 **FX/balloon: SHU**—sound of pneumatics activating
- 12.4.2 **FX/balloon: SHUU**—sound of pneumatics
- 14.6 Each of the robotics students is, of course, named after the inventor of the (imaginary) robot whose paradigm they champion: Tomino, from Yoshiyuki Tomino, creator of *Gundam* (he's also wearing the Zeon symbol from *Gundam* on his T-shirt); Nagai, from Go Nagai, creator of *Mazinger Z* (he likewise wears a "Z" on his own shirt); and Tezuka, from—wait for

it—Osamu Tezuka, creator of *Astro Boy* (she, showing somewhat better taste, sports a white turtleneck). As you can see from their conversation, they represent three different images anime has given pop culture in Japan of what a "robot" is. *Gundam*, which premiered in 1979, epitomizes the so-called "real robot," where a robot is a mass-produced weapon, just like a plane or tank, made for future wars driven by politics, ideology, or economics, just like today's wars. *Mazinger Z*, which premiered in 1972, exemplified the "super robot," where a robot is a rare or unique machine that typically fights the "monster of the week" unleashed by the flamboyant forces of evil. The distinction is valid, yet is also understandably often lost on people who aren't otaku, seeing as how both kinds of shows involve young pilots commanding giant, humanoid robots; moreover, popular shows such as 1995's *Evangelion* combined elements of the "super" and "real" robot, to the extent that fans now speak of "hybrid robot" shows. If you haven't fallen asleep by now, the larger distinction would seem to be between both "super" and "real" robots and the kind exemplified by *Astro Boy*. Some would say that, properly speaking, those former two categories aren't robots at all, and when you think "robot," you really mean something like the eponymous *Astro Boy*—not a machine with a human inside controlling it, but a human-sized machine that independently moves and thinks on its own. Of course, Americans might be more likely to think of the Terminator, rather than *Astro Boy* . . . In Brian Winston's

fascinating book *Media Technology and Society*, the author shows that inventions are developed not only because they become technically possible, but because society shows a need for them; conversely, if society doesn't desire an invention, its progress might be slowed or abandoned. Japan seems to be the world leader in robotics in part because their society seems simply to like the idea of robots more than ours, and it's fair to say that *is* in part due to the influence of manga such as *Astro Boy*.

- 15.1 Yata's remark makes me think about the *Akira* movie. It's one of the greatest anime films ever made, and in fact made such a strong impression in the late '80s and early '90s, that fans sometimes had trouble explaining to newcomers that not all anime had to be like *Akira*. But, to many of today's anime fans, *Akira* isn't something that's overexposed—*Akira* is something that came out before they were *born*.
- 15.5 **FX: SHUU**—air leaking sound
- 17.3 **FX: ZURURURU**—dragging sound
- 18.2 **FX: GACHA**—door opening
- 18.3 **FX: DOSASA**—group falling down exhausted
- 18.4 **FX/balloon: KIIN**—sound of metal tip of cane striking floor
- 19.2 I can't help but notice that, although Ao and Sasayama presumably also wear glasses to correct vision, theirs are more stylish than Nagai, Tezuka, and Tomino's. At Fanime-Con '08, it seemed half the Gainax

contingent was wearing the kind of narrow, Chanel-style frames that Ao sports. Of course, from a *meganekko* perspective, it's frequently the case that the bigger and more unstylish the glasses, the *more* erotic, as seen with Nagai, Koyomi Mizuhara, Yomiko Readman, or Morrissey when he did "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now" on *Top of the Pops*. I'm sorry to sexualize everything, but when I became an otaku, I gave up my moral rights, much like a Shining Stars contract.

- 22.1 The "Broadband Center" in which the rest of this story takes place is a play on the actual Nakano Broadway building, a multistory shopping center in the Nakano district of Tokyo. Akihabara is the neighborhood that gets international attention for its otaku scene (even in Japan, ordinary folk have been known to gawk at the beautiful freaks, the same way they used to have bus tours of Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s). But Nakano is the older hardcore fan hangout, for in 1987, Mandarake was established in the Broadway Building—and Mandarake was basically the first collector's store for anime and manga goods (it is a sign, perhaps, of how mainstream comics are in Japan, that it took so long to develop a specialized collectors' market). The Kurosagi gang drove there, but you'll probably take the JR Chuo Line. Getting off at Nakano Station, you'll take the north exit and enter a long, broad hallway that looks more or less like an American shopping mall—but this is only the Sun Mall Shopping Center, and the Broadway, attached to it, is at the

end. The Broadway itself, being a forty-year-old building, is narrower in its walkways and is divided into small, swap-meet-sized partitions, of which some stores take up only one, while others (such as Mandarake) take up many. Not only does Broadway have the goods (there are *nineteen* different Mandarake substores inside, each specializing in such wares as doujinshi, toys, old videocassettes, LDs, and even 8mm reels), it has character: the vegetarian restaurant, mysterious flyers posted about, and Taco Ché, the world's greatest postcard and T-shirt store, give parts of it a vaguely student-union air. The nicest thing about both Mandarake and the Broadway Building is that they're genuinely interested in foreign customers; Mandarake has staff that speak English, Spanish, French, Korean, and Mandarin. The English-language homepage of Mandarake's store in the Broadway is <http://www.mandarake.co.jp/en/shop/nkn.html>, whereas the English-language page of the Broadway Building itself is at www.bwy.jp, although, mysteriously, it plays Paris Hilton's "Stars Are Blind" upon opening. As much as I feel she betrayed the proud legacy of Conrad Hilton (growing up in hotel rooms with their Gideons, I thought *Be My Guest* was the Apocrypha), it's a perfectly good song. Let us separate the creator from their art.

22.2 *Toradarake* is a portmanteau—if that's the word I'm looking for, Jeeves—of Mandarake with the name of another real-life store, Toranoana. There is, in fact, no Toranoana in the Broadway Building (there are five of the

stores in other parts of Tokyo, however, including Akihabara), but the zombie robot is probably artistic license, too. Toranoana (which, unlike Mandarake, does not make foreign sales) specializes in selling doujinshi—self-published zines, usually consisting of manga content—and as you may have heard, most doujinshi are unauthorized parodies of licensed characters (there are so many "doujin" published, however, that there are thousands of original ones each year as well). But, being a brick-and-mortar store chain, it represents just how un-underground doujinshi are in Japan; in fact, Toranoana habitually takes out the back-cover ad on the monthly *Shonen Ace* magazine, the original home of *Kurosagi*—and of many manga parodied in the doujinshi Toranoana sells. Now, this utterly cavalier treatment of intellectual property by both rights-holder and fan may seem horrific by American legal standards, but tell me: if it's so detrimental, then how come the Japanese comics industry is much bigger than ours? How come it's better *mon-e-tized*? And don't tell me it's because "the Japanese are different"; that's the same simple excuse that was used in the 1970s and '80s in our auto and electronics industries. Businesses and legal practices reflect a larger culture, but they are also things that are changed by people and companies, through new decisions, theories, and initiatives. History doesn't have to run in a straight line; consider that in the 1980s, the trendsetting portable music player was Japanese, the Sony Walkman; today,

it is American, Apple's iPod. Speaking of turning things around, perhaps you're wondering if anyone's made a *Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service* doujinshi in Japan. No, not that I know of. Show the world the true spirit of Yankee innovation, and be the first! I heard there's a Yata/Karatsu shipper out there.

22.3 There actually *is* a swap-meet element to the Nakano Broadway; some of its myriad glass display cases are the wares of its resident stores, but some are available for a monthly rent to individual collectors, who can use them to show off and sell their personal stuff on consignment. Now, having just sung a long paragraph of praise about the Mandarake in Nakano, Patrick Macias and Matt Alt have reported on the recent opening of the *new* Mandarake store in the T-shirt-stretched belly of the beast, Akihabara, saying that it appears to have better stock than the one in Nakano. Hear the scoop on episode #4 of the official podcast of *Otaku USA*, the magazine that's putting the man into the manga, and the fu fu into the fujoshi (http://patrickmacias.blogs.com/er/files/otaku_usa_podcast_4.mp3).

22.3.1 All right, back to the sound effects.

23.2 **FX: GYU**—tightening his bandanna

23.3 **FX/balloon: GASHAN**
GASHAN—sound of metallic footsteps

23.4 **FX: GASHA GASHA GASHAN**—metallic footsteps

24.3.1 **FX: GASHA**—pulling out cartridge sound

24.3.2 **FX/balloon: BIKU BIKUN**—robot shuddering/twitching when the cart is pulled

24.4 **FX: GAKUN**—robot slumping over

24.5 In the original Japanese, she said a Famicom cartridge—which was what Nintendo was called in Japan (it was a contraction of *Family Computer*).

24.6 Made up, from combining the genuine games *Super Mario Brothers* and *Donkey Kong*.

25.2 Whereas Americans pronounce the letter “Z” as *zee*, the Japanese use the traditional British *zed*, pronounced as *zetto*; hence *Mazinger Z* is sometimes spoken out as *Mazinger Zetto*. “Soul of Chogokin” is the name of Bandai’s line of high-end adult collector’s toys based on classic robot series such as *Mazinger Z*; in the anime, the robot itself was said to be made of *chogokin*, or “super alloy.” This is the same *Mazinger*, by the way, that was part of the dope Shogun Warriors toy line, if you were lucky enough to have one in the 1970s. The editor was not lucky enough. Had things worked out differently for him in the Carter years, he would have arranged a fitting showdown between *Mazinger* and his Marx Navarone Giant Play Set.

25.3 *Pilder on!* is what hot-blooded young hero Koji Kabuto calls out when he docks his Hover Pilder craft with *Mazinger Z*’s head, which then becomes the cockpit where he controls the robot. You’re thinking I know why it’s called “Pilder,” but I don’t.

- 25.4 FX: GASHU**—sound of the cartridge being put in
- 25.5.1 FX/balloon: SHAN**—sound of a robot landing
- 25.5.2 FX/balloon: PYON GASHAN**—jumping sound, then a robot landing sound
- 25.5.3 FX: YON**—jumping sound
- 25.5.4 FX/balloon: PYON GASHAN**—jumping sound, then a robot landing sound
- 26.2 FX: GASHA GASHAN**—mechanical footsteps
- 26.5** It's a cliché in giant robot anime that you start off with such robots being few: rare technological artifacts, or advanced prototypes, and then sooner or later, someone figures out how to make a "mass production version."
- 27.3 FX: MOGO**—muffled sound
- 27.4.1 FX/balloon: JAAA**—sound of running water
- 27.4.2 FX/balloon: KYU**—sound of a tap being closed
- 27.5 FX/balloon: CHARARAN**—sound of pendulum falling on the floor
- 27.6 FX/balloon: GUKU**—sound of lower back straining
- 27.7 FX: PURAN PURAN**—sound of the pendulum dangling
- 28.2 FX: HYUN HYUN**—sound of the pendulum swinging
- 30.1** The last ten years have seen a lot of new anime shows assigned to late-night time slots on cable—generally, this happens to shows that are considered to have appeal mainly to hardcore fans, as

opposed to an anime directed at the mass market such as *Naruto*, which would air at better hours. *Neon Genesis Evangelion* was on broadcast TV at 7 PM on Sundays; but I suspect that were the show to have aired for the first time today, it might have been assigned to late-night cable instead—where it might never reach the nationwide audience among whom it became a phenomenon in 1995.

- 30.3 FX/balloon: PURAN**—sound of the controller dangling

- 31.1 FX: TA TA TA**—running sound

- 31.4 FX/balloon: GASHAAN**—sound of breaking glass

- 31.5** The cat ears, or *nekomimi*, are part of the real Toranoana staff style, as their mascot is a tiger cub (*tora* means tiger), and the store name itself is said to come from writer Ikki Kajiwarra (cocreator also of the famous sports manga *Ashita no Joe* and *Star of the Giants*) and artist Naoki Tsuji's wrestling epic *Tiger Mask*. Fred Schodt had a genius in his 1983 book *Manga! Manga!* for picking panels that seemed to sum up an entire series, and I vividly remember (this was in the late Rory Root's onetime store on Telegraph Ave., Best of Both Worlds) the image Schodt chose for *Tiger Mask*, showing the eponymously vizarded hero launching himself feet first at his hooded foe Golgotha Cross—who takes his stance in the ring next to a giant, nail-studded cross, for he is Golgotha Cross by name, and Golgotha Cross by nature. You can see why I spent the twenty bucks

I had planned for *X-Men* #121 on *Manga! Manga!* instead—even Claremont, Byrne, and Austin put together couldn't compete with *that*.

- 33.4 **FX: GASHAN GASHAN**
GASHAN—running robot sound
- 33.5 **FX: PITA**—robot stopping
- 34.1 **FX: GASHA GASHA GASHA**—robot footsteps
- 35.1.1 **FX: GORORO**—rolling sound
- 35.1.2 **FX/balloon: GASHAN**—sound of robot hitting the ground
- 35.2 **FX/balloon: KARAN**—faceplate clanking on ground
- 37.3 Tomino is referring to the famous 1783 observation by Luigi Galvani, who was dissecting a frog when his assistant touched a scalpel to the frog's sciatic nerve. The scalpel, having built up an electrical charge earlier, transferred it to the nerve, causing the frog's leg to kick. This was the first evidence that electricity had a role to play in animating life, and, as you might guess, helped to inspire Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein*.
- 37.4 **FX/balloon: PIKU**—robot twitching
- 37.5 **FX: CHIRA**—glancing over sound
- 38.1 **FX/balloon: SU**—picking up game
- 38.3 **FX/balloon: GACHA**—sound of a game cart being pushed in
- 38.4 **FX/box: PIRO RIRO RIROOON**—8-bit game music starting. This is the editor's attempt to express the *Donkey Kong* theme, the only 8-bit theme he knows.
- 39.1 **FX: GASHA GASHAN GASHAN**—robot footsteps

- 39.5 **FX/balloon: PI**—pressing a button on the cell phone
- 40.2 **FX: PIPA**—hanging-up sound
- 41.2.1 **FX: GASHAN**—breaking glass
- 41.2.2 **FX: PARIN**—falling glass shattering
- 41.4 **FX/robot: PIROIROON**—video-game sound
- 42.1 The translator suggests Zombiekun is swinging Guts's sword from *Berserk*, whereas the blade to the right looks like the Master Sword from the *Zelda* video-game series, and the sword to the left seems to come from *Card Captor Sakura*.
- 43.4 **FX: DOKA DOKA**—running up stairs sound
- 43.5 **FX: HYUBA**—giant sword coming down
- 44.1.1 **FX: BAKYAAAN**—plastic sword shattering
- 44.1.2 **FX/balloon: KAN**—piece of sword hitting escalator
- 44.1.3 **FX/balloon: KARARAN**—piece of sword hitting escalator
- 44.4 **FX: BA**—putting hand on head
- 45.4 **FX: NU**—sound of the soul coming out
- 47.1 Even at this critical moment in the plot, please note the *Magical Maid Girl Mumume-Tan R* poster—the character Makino was forced to cosplay in Vol. 5. The “R” implies that a sequel has now been made, as the second season of *Sailor Moon* was called *Sailor Moon R* (for “Return”). You have not, by the way, seen the last of Mumume-tan in this manga.

- 47.2 FX: FURA**—body starting to fall over
- 47.3.1 FX/balloon: GARA GARA**—sound of robot sliding down escalator
- 47.3.2 FX/balloon: GASHAN**—robot coming to a stop at the bottom
- 49.1** As you may have noticed, there are two translation credits in Vol. 7; right after Toshifumi Yoshida did “1st Delivery,” he had to take a hiatus from the book—but for a good cause, as he was hired by Bandai as an anime dub producer, his first assignment being the English version of *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, which should have been on the Sci-Fi Channel’s Ani-Monday block for several weeks by the time you read this (as mentioned previously in “Disjecta Membra,” Toshi was the producer of the English dubs of *Inu-Yasha*, *Ranma 1/2*, *Maison Ikkoku*, and *Jin-Roh*). I am grateful to Taylor Engel who was able to pinch-hit for the rest of the volume; many of the notes in this volume’s “Disjecta Membra” are therefore also hers.
- 49.2 FX: KA**—high heel clicking on pavement
- 50.1 FX: GOOOOO**—sound of speeding truck
- 50.3 FX: SU**—hands being stealthily raised
- 50.4 FX: KU**—pushing
- 50.5 FX: YORO**—woman stumbling forward
- 51.1 FX: PAAAA**—truck’s horn blaring
- 51.2 FX: DOKO**—whud!
- 51.3.1 FX/balloon: BYUCHA**—wet splatter
- 51.3.2 FX/balloon: BITA**—something splattering and sticking
- 51.4 FX/balloon: KIIII**—squealing brakes
- 55.3 FX: ZA**—turning to leave
- 56.1 FX/balloon: PARA**—page turning
- 56.3 FX/balloon: GACHA**—Door opening
- 57.5** Sydney-based Japanese media scholar and artist Zen Yipu has written in a 2004 issue of the journal *Humanities Research* on “generations of Japanese female audiences who have idolized and imitated Audrey Hepburn . . . She is popular not only among middle-aged women who have grown up watching her movies, and therefore might have nostalgic memories of her, but also among young women in their mid-20s who would have no such recollections of her. This latter group has learnt about her either through watching old films or through seeing her ‘reincarnations’ [as a number of dead actors have in America, Hepburn has been CG-reanimated for commercials in Japan—ed.] in the marketplace. There is no other western idol who enjoys the same level of popularity in Japan, a popularity which endures even today, in 2004, more than a decade after her death.” Zen goes on to quote Japan’s trend-tracking magazine *Dime*’s explanation that “[Hepburn] has black hair, black eyes and a

slender physique just like the Japanese. Unlike the blonde glamour of a [Marilyn] Monroe type, her appearance has a feeling of familiarity with that of the Japanese female."

- 58.3** See 19.2. Or read *Dime*, which, by the way, is published by Shogakukan, better known in the U.S. for their manga. It's good to remember that manga publishers large and small in Japan are often part of larger book- and magazine-publishing entities. *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*, for example, appears in Kadokawa's *Comic Charge* magazine, but Kadokawa's best-selling magazine isn't a manga one, but rather the weekly what's-happening-in-town *Tokyo Walker*. Complicating the issue a bit more in the best "Disjuncta Membra" manner, non-manga magazines in Japan are known to sometimes have a regular manga feature. Yoshinori Kobayashi's controversial ("How would you feel about playing a controversial manga-ka?" "Yeah, I'm with it!") *Gomanism Sengen* ("The Arrogance Manifesto") runs in the contemporary biweekly affairs newsmagazine *Sapio*, whereas Kazuo Koike and Hideki Mori's *New Lone Wolf and Cub* ran in the weekly (middle-aged) men's magazine *Shukan Post*. Such a slot in a nonmanga magazine might be advantageous for an individual manga, since it doesn't have to compete for attention with other stories, may connect with people who ordinarily wouldn't follow manga (there are plenty of these in Japan; comics readership isn't universal in Japan,

it's just wider and more accepted than in the U.S.), and, as mentioned, may find itself having a wider circulation than in an actual manga magazine.

- 60.1** **FX: SARAN**—hair being swept out of the way, model-style.
- 62.5.1** **FX/balloon: HIKU**—twitching
- 62.5.2** **FX/balloon: PIKU**—quiver
- 62.6** **FX/balloon: PACHI**—eyes opening
- 65.2** The woman in back is wearing the habit of a Buddhist nun, or *bhikkhuni*. It is the editor's impression that even though neither Asian nor European culture has had any shortage of sexism, nevertheless it was historically more accepted and respectable for women to take holy orders in Catholicism than Buddhism—perhaps because of the prominence given to a figure such as the Virgin Mary. Even though Buddhism has the longer tradition in Japan, it seems more common to find Catholic nuns as heroines in manga, such as Rosette Christopher of *Chrono Crusade* and Yumie Takagi from *Hellsing*. Now, these nuns are admittedly portrayed with a smidgen of poetic license, but at least Japan still thinks nuns are cute, an attitude that hasn't been seen in the West since the youth of Sally Field.
- 66.4** **FX/balloon: DON**—jabbing with elbow
- 67.1** The translator notes a *jinmenso* is usually seen as able to talk and even eat, and can therefore be killed by feeding it medicine or poison. It is possibly inspired by

- the rare congenital abnormality of a parasitic twin.
- 67.2 FX: SU**—drawing photos out of file
- 67.3 FX/balloon: BASA**—scattering photos across table
- 68.2** In the original Japanese, Kereellis said *Nande ya nen!* which the translator points out means “What was *that* for?” in a Kansai accent (usually associated with the city of Osaka, which bears a cultural relationship to Tokyo *somewhat* comparable to that which Brooklyn or New Jersey does to Manhattan). It’s a stock phrase in traditional Kansai *manzai*, or double act comedy. The internationally known actor and director Takeshi Kitano (*Battle Royale*, *HANA-BI*) got his start in *manzai*; although well known in Japan as a comedian, perhaps the closest Americans have gotten to that side of him is on Spike TV’s *MXC*, a facetiously dubbed version of his late-’80s game show *Takeshi’s Castle* (like *Iron Chef*, it has been one of the more internationally popular Japanese live-action series).
- 68.4 FX: PORI**—scritch
- 69.4 FX: SU**—soft touch
- 69.5 FX: KIIIIIIIIIN**—high-pitched ringing in the ears
- 70-71.2 FX: BA**—energy (?) shooting from hand
- 70-71.3 FX: BA BA**—energy (?) shooting from hand
- 72.3 FX: ZUZU**—Karatsu’s soul getting pulled out of his body
- 73.3 FX/balloon: PON**—slapping on the shoulder
- 73.4 FX: DOSA**—Karatsu’s body falling to the floor
- 77.2** It is assumed “someone like that” refers to Karatsu, but the pronoun she uses isn’t gendered, so there’s a possibility that she means someone else.
- 78.1** You can set your watch by the Kadokawa references in *Kurosagi*, and here it turns out they run the “Kadokawa Central Hospital,” too.
- 78.3.1 FX/balloon: SUU KOO**—breathing on a respirator
- 78.3.2 FX/balloon: SUU**—breathing on a respirator
- 78.4 FX/balloon: GACHYA**—door opening
- 82.1** The translator notes that her chuckling in the original has the sound *u fu fu*, a sort of “weird, close-mouthed” sound for which it’s hard to find an exact equivalent in American English.
- 82.4 FX/balloon: KATA**—Clipboard clicking against the desk. Note the chart claims Makino is only 18! Although that would make her elderly by the standards of many manga, it seems perhaps too young for someone who’s presumably been in college a while. Of course, she might have either a.) started college early, or b.) be lying on the form. Sasayama’s transition in appearance between *MPD-Psycho* and *Kurosagi* certainly establishes a precedent for uncertainty in an Eiji Otsuka manga.
- 83.4 FX: SU**—standing up
- 85.2 FX/balloon: KASA KASA**—sawdust rustling

- 86.1** In Japanese, "ear" is mimi (see 31.5), but in the original manga, Numata heard it as "*mini*," and thought Makino was referring to Minnie Mouse. It's interesting to observe his thought processes.
- 86.3** In the August 1997 issue of the journal *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*. The doctors were Joseph P. Vacanti, Keith T. Paige, and Joseph Upton; the biomaterials engineer was Yilin Cao—although he in fact holds a medical degree as well. Incidentally, the editor started working professionally in the U.S. anime and manga industry while a medical librarian in Houston (it was more *Slacker* than *Reality Bites*), a job that could have inspired any number of *Corpse Delivery Service* stories. The library was eliminated from the Texas Medical Center's budget (and much of its holdings simply thrown away; I made off with a 16mm film in French about onchocerciasis) in part, I was told, because of the massive subscription fees charged at the time to institutions—as much as \$15,000 a year per journal. It looked to me back then as if the *real* money was in publishing.
- 87.5** **FX/balloon: CHORO**—skitter
- 89.3** **FX: TO TO TO**—mouse scampering over
- 90.2** **FX/balloon: GACHYA**—door opening
- 90.4.1** **FX/balloon: SUU KOO**—breathing on a respirator
- 90.4.2** **FX/balloon: SUU**—breathing on a respirator
- 91.1** **FX: SU**—soft touch
- 94.1** **FX/balloon: FURARI**—unsteady, faltering walk
- 94.3** **FX: PAAAAA**—car horn honking
- 94.4** **FX: DOGA**—whud! Did you spot the Kadokawa building? The real Kadokawa building, by the way, has their phoenix logo rendered on its front in a pattern of raised bricks.
- 94.5** **FX/balloon: KII**—Squealing brakes
- 95.1** **FX: GACHYA**—door opening
- 95.2** In the original Japanese, "big bro" (as said by a man) is *aniki*. Its use in this context suggests the two are involved in organized crime—as small-timers, from the look of it.
- 96.2** By the way, the Japanese above "MENTAL CLINIC" says "Jenny Kayama," the name of the proprietor.
- 98.1** **FX: GORORI**—head rolling over lazily
- 100.1** **FX: DOKO**—whump!
- 105.2** **FX: GOOOO**—speeding car
- 106.4** **FX: KII**—car braking
- 109.4** **FX/balloon: BATAN**—door closing sharply
- 110.1** **FX: DOSA**—body bag being dumped on the ground
- 110.4.1** **FX/balloon: MOZO GOSO**—something rustling inside thick fabric
- 110.4.2** **FX/balloon: KATSU KOTSU**—heels clicking on tile
- 113.1** The letterer notes that this image puts him in mind of the 1999 Korean horror film *Tell Me Something*.
- 114.4** **FX: JIRIRIRIRIRIRI**—fire alarm

- 114.5 FX: GOOOOO**—fire roaring
- 115.1 FX: KYUBON**—the sound of a glass-fronted building exploding
- 115.2 FX/balloon: CHU CHU**—mouse squeaking
- 117.1.1 FX/balloon: BON**—container clanging over onto its side
- 117.1.2 FX/balloon: BAKAN**—lid popping off from the heat
- 117.2 FX: GOOO**—fire roaring
- 117.5 FX/balloon: GOPON**—underwater burbling
- 117.6 FX: SA**—Sasaki shifting position, quickly
- 119.1 FX: KIIIIIN**—high-pitched ringing in the ears
- 121.1** The translator notes that Sasaki's spirit form has kept her glasses on, even though she's lost her clothes. But that's the power of a *meganekko*.
- 122.1 FX: BAGASHAAAN**—tank shattering
- 123.2 FX: DOCHA**—splish
- 123.3.1 FX: PICHA**—drip
- 123.3.2 FX: BECHARI**—wet squishing
- 123.4 FX: PICHIRI**—wet bare footstep
- 128.1 FX: DOSA**—Numata dumping the corpse on Yata
- 128.2 FX/balloon: ZA**—quick movement
- 128.3 FX: DOSU**—whump!
- 129.1 FX: GOOOOOOO**—roaring fire
- 129.2 FX/balloon: JIJI**—paper sizzling away
- 129.3.1 FX/balloon: BON**—muffled explosion
- 129.3.2 FX/balloon: PACHIN**—glass shattering
- 130.1 FX/balloon: SA**—Sasaki turning quickly
- 132.4.1 FX: PIIIPOOOPIIIPOOO**—fire engine sirens
- 132.4.2 FX: UUUUUU**—alarm
- 133.1** They are all cosplaying literary detectives: Karatsu as Kousuke Kindaichi—also the “real” protagonist of the movie being parodied in this episode—a fictional Japanese sleuth made famous in the postwar novels of Seishi Yokomizo. The manga series *The Kindaichi Case Files*, released in the U.S. by Tokyopop (“Disjecta Membra”’s cracks taketh away, and “Disjecta Membra”’s cracks giveth) stars Hajime, the supposed grandson of Yokomizo’s character, although it is said, much as with *Lupin III*, this is an unauthorized tribute. Makino is doing . . . oh, who could that be. Numata, not surprisingly, is playing private eye Shunsaku Kudo, from the 1979–90 TV series *Tantel Monogatari* (“Detective Story”), portrayed by the late Yusaku Matsuda, an actor still the epitome of cool to many Japanese men—his appearance is said to have inspired that of Spike Spiegel in *Cowboy Bebop*. Anyway, Yata is dressed as Agatha Christie’s Belgian, not French, detective Hercule Poirot, whereas Sasaki (rather charmingly) portrays Christie’s Miss Marple. The appearance of these last two is possibly inspired by the recent 2004–2005 anime series on NHK,

Agatha Christie's Great Detectives Poirot and Marple (homepage <http://www3.nhk.or.jp/anime/agatha/>).

134.2.1 FX: JYABU JYABU—splash splash

134.2.2 FX: CHAPU—splish

135.3 The director's shirt has the kanji for *konbu*, seaweed, which is also the character's last name. He is a parody of the late Ichikawa Kon, who died on February 13 of this year at the age of 92, the last surviving representative of a group of directors (including Akira Kurosawa and Hiroshi Inagaki) who brought Japanese cinema to world attention in the 1950s.

136.1 The film being shot here is a parody of Ichikawa Kon's *Inugami-mike no ichizoku*, or *The Inugami Clan*. Written in 1950, this is one of Seishi Yokomizo's famous Kousuke Kindaichi mysteries—the story of the death of silk tycoon Sahei Inugami at his lakeside villa, and the string of gruesome murders over his inheritance that ensue. It has in fact been adapted as a movie three times to date in Japan, in 1954, 1976, and 2006. The last two versions were done by Kon, and the 1976 one, in particular, was one of the biggest domestic box-office successes in Japanese history. It was produced by Haruki Kadokawa—former president of the itself formidable Kadokawa clan. Despite its fame inside Japan, there is no U.S. release on home video, although a Hong Kong (Region 3) DVD under the title *The Inugami Family* is available with English subtitles. An English-language

version of the original novel of *The Inugami Clan* is available from my stromies, my homies, Stone Bridge Press (www.stonebridge.com).

137.5 FX: ZUZU—slurping tea. The detective in the parody is named Koutarou Kintaichi rather than Kousuke Kindaichi; “suke” and “tarou” are both common endings for boys' names.

139.3 Koyama has switched from saying “Makino-san” at the beginning of this conversation to saying “Makino-chan” here; indicating he's gone from formal to familiar.

141.3 FX: SU—appearing abruptly

142.3 FX/balloon: KACHI—clapper board clicking

143.1 FX/balloon: GISHI GISHI—old stair treads creaking

143.4 FX: FU—fainting

143.5 FX/balloon: BATAN—fwump

144.1 FX/balloon: CHIRA—peek

146.4 FX: KAAAN—megaphone hitting floor

147.2 FX: DOSU DOSU—stomp stomp

148.3 FX: HYUN HYUN—pendulum swinging vigorously

148.5 The translator notes that this is a remarkably awkward name to try to pronounce in English: “ooh-heh-eh-ohh.”

149.2 FX: GURARI—teeter

149.3 FX: DOSA—thump

150.3 FX/balloon: JIWA—seep

153.2 FX: BA!—snatching cell phone away

- 155.1 FX: PACHA**—splish
- 155.3.1 FX: BASHA BASHA**—splash splash
- 155.3.2 FX/balloon: SUI**—frog sliding into water
- 155.7** Makino is, of course, quoting the actress's line from 134.1.
- 156.5 FX/balloon: BURORORO**—vroooooom
- 157.2 FX: ZA**—footstep
- 157.6 FX/balloon: KOKU**—nod
- 157.7** Judging by Kereellis's expression, that lake must have been mighty chilly, even by the standards of the interstellar void. As the late Sullivan Carew pointed out, "space is one cold motherfucker."
- 158.3 FX: GATA**—clatter
- 158.4** The original Japanese laugh went *hu hu hu hu*, and the translator suggests that English isn't very good at expressing the changing nuance of the laughter here; the first time he laughs, it's a deep-throated chuckle, the second time, it's sort of a menacing snigger, and the last time is full-out maniacal laughter.
- 159.3 FX: GU**—tug
- 159.4 FX: GU GU**—pulling the mask off
- 159.5 FX: PASA**—mask hitting the floor
- 162.6 FX: BA**—Koyama turning back quickly
- 163.3 FX: DOSU**—heavy thump
- 164.2 FX/balloon: BURORORO**—vroooooom
- 164.4 FX/balloon: GAKO GAKO**—empty clunking
- 165.1.1 FX: GON**—muted explosion
- 165.1.2 FX: BAKI**—snap
- 165.1.3 FX/balloon: BO**—bursting into flames
- 165.3.1 FX: BAKI BEKI**—snapping underbrush noises
- 165.3.2 FX/balloon: BA**—car becoming airborne
- 166.1 FX/balloon: SU**—hand being raised
- 166.5 FX: DOSA**—heavy thud
- 167.1 FX/balloon: JI JI JI**—body bag zipper being unzipped
- 172.4 FX: DOCHA**—wet squelch
- 173.4 FX: SU**—placing fingers on corpse
- 174.3 FX: YURA**—pendulum beginning to swing
- 174.4 FX: HYUN HYUN**—pendulum swinging violently
- 175.2 FX: MUKU**—corpse getting up
- 175.3 FX: YURARI**—corpse swaying on its feet
- 176.3** In the original, Makino uses the technical term *kaeri chi*, meant specifically to refer to blood that splashes back onto the killer from their victim; it is also used when discussing this phenomenon in close combat. This might be a good time to note that I've been seeing a lot of Spartans at anime and manga cons lately. As a purist I should object, but as a Dark Horse employee, I just pretend they're from *Arion*. Now, every once in a while you'll have an Akiba moment in Portland. Today, about 11 AM, I saw an individual in full Stormtrooper kit walking across Burnside at

21st. Burnside is one of our main streets, four lanes, supermarkets, gas stations, what have you. It was an odd hour for a costume party, and if it was for a graduation, there weren't any schools for several blocks. But to paraphrase LL Cool J, I love it when an otaku ain't scared to do his thing.

176.6 FX: SA!—Koyama hastily covering the stain

177.2 FX: DA DA DA—heavy running footsteps

177.3.1 FX/balloon: SA!—brandishing box cutter

177.3.2 FX/balloon: CHIKI CHIKI CHIKI—box cutter blade being extended

177.4 FX: BA!—Koyama yanking the director to him

179.1 FX: BUN BUN—swinging the box cutter around

180.1 FX: SHIN—silence

180.5 FX: GORO GORO—roll roll

180.6 FX/balloon: TON—light tap

181.2 FX: BA!—eyes and mouth flying open

181.4 FX: NUU—loom

184.2.1 FX/balloon: DA DA TA—running feet

184.2.2 FX: BA!—door being yanked open

184.6 FX: SU!—director raising his hand

186.2 FX: PASA—mask falling to floor

187.2 The close-up on the billboard in panel 1 and the film program Yata is reading in panel 3 (while rare in America, theater-style film program books are a common marketing tool in Japan; in the

1980s and '90s, the program books for anime films were much-sought-after import items by American fans hungry for images and info) says *The Corpse Detective*, naturally. It's playing on screen 2 of the Shinjuku Milano, a real movie house that as of this writing (June 2008) was screening *Shoot 'Em Up*, *Prince Caspian*, and *Rambo*—the last of which, as Patrick Macias has detailed, had a much better promo campaign in Japan, where you could get the Rambo Hot Dog (deployed on camouflage cardboard for “sneaking snacking”), the Rambo coffee-based energy drink, and the Rambo crocodile burger, served on an eco-friendly palm leaf. Gory pictures on the May 18 posting at patrickmacias.blogspot.com, which you really should be reading every day anyway. Playing next door appears to be the *Keroro Gunso* (known as *Sgt. Frog* in the U.S.) movie *The Deep Sea Princess*. Movie tickets for an adult in Tokyo, by the way, average 1800 yen; one reason manga are so successful is that they're one of the few entertainment *values* in Japan—they pay more than Americans for DVDs, CDs, and even songs on iTunes.

187.3 FX/balloon: PARA—page turning

188.4 We're working on it! Seriously, we are. You know Dark Horse doesn't give up when it comes to making titles into movies (or TV shows). It took forty-five years between *Iron Man* the comic and the movie—I bet you we do better than that. And thanks to everyone who's supporting *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*—see you in January 2009 for Volume 8!

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Collecting can take over a fan's life . . . what if it takes over their *death* as well? Zombie robot otaku and plastic surgery disasters are only the latest faces of horror as Kurosagi continues their eternal struggle to turn corpses into cash! But when Karatsu falls into a bizarre trap set for him by the sinister Shirosagi pair, can the rest of the gang save him . . . or even themselves?

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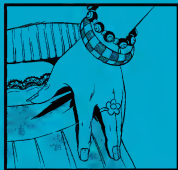
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Channeling

[チャネリング]: 宇宙人と交信

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